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PUNCH or THE London Charivari—December 22 1954

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December
22
1954

PUNCH OFFICE 10 BOUVERIE STREET LONDON E. C. 4



MASTERPIECES OF THE CRAFTSMEN'S ART

presented by

LOCKHEED

Makers of the World's Safest Brakes

The delicate beauty of this perfect piece of porcelain is summed up in one word . . . Dresden. In the same way the name LOCKHEED is the symbol of a precision and dependability unequalled in the field of hydraulic braking.

80% of the world's cars
fit Lockheed

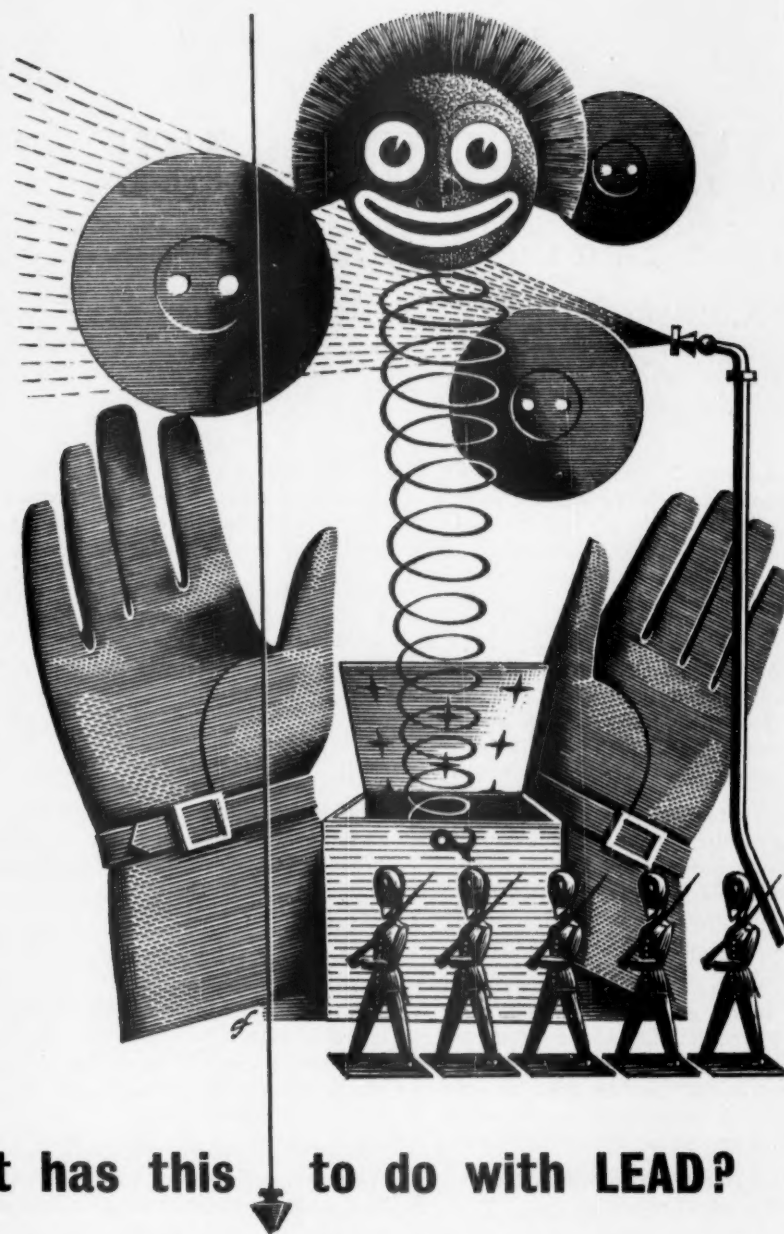
AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS COMPANY LTD., LEAMINGTON SPA



Santa knows best!
it's

Mayfair
NEW Super
PREMIÈRE
ASSORTMENT

of course!



What has this to do with LEAD?

As far as the jack-in-the-box is concerned, nothing whatever—he's just put there to fox you. Everything else makes sense. The lead soldiers are obvious, but did you know that lead gloves protect atomic physicists from radio-active materials? Lead buttons hold theatre curtains in their classic folds. Lead arsenate sprays kill codlin grubs on apple trees. Lead weights on sounding lines help sailors to swing the lead. Lead is red, lead is white, lead is blue . . . and the people who can tell you all about it are —

ASSOCIATED LEAD
MANUFACTURERS LIMITED



SPECIALISTS IN THE MANUFACTURE OF LEAD AND ANTIMONY PRODUCTS

TRINIDAD LEASEHOLDS LTD

Highlights from the 1954 Statement by the Chairman, Mr. Simon J. Vos

Abstracted from the chairman's statement circulated with the accounts of Trinidad Leaseholds Ltd. for the year ended 30th June, 1954, with previous year's figures in brackets.



THE GROUP had another satisfactory year and further expanded its trade despite severe competition. More crude oil was produced and the group's markets made greater demands on the Trinidad refinery, largely because of the growing sales of the Regent Oil Company's products, especially "REGENT T.T.", its premium brand of petrol.

World oil supply and demand both attained new peaks in 1953, with supply outpacing demand, and this trend has continued. Also, tanker availability has exceeded requirements and much of the world's tanker tonnage has been laid up.

Consolidated net profit for the year was £1,851,629 (£1,774,652) after providing £3,400,217 (£3,150,461) for taxation. The total available for appropriation in the parent company's accounts was £2,041,014 (£1,754,875) of which £800,000 (£1,000,000) was transferred to reserves; dividends absorbed £655,781 (£327,890) and £585,233 (£426,985) was carried forward.

The company's issued capital was doubled in December, 1953, by capitalising share premiums already subscribed by stockholders and became £3,278,904. Reserves in the balance sheet at 30th June, 1954 totalled £8,012,816 in the case of the parent company and £11,226,277 for the group.

In Trinidad the company crude oil production rose without adversely affecting oil reserves.

The year under review represented the first full year's operation of the catalytic cracking and associated plants completed in the previous year, and operations were very satisfactory. In order to meet the company's growing market requirements, particularly

in the United Kingdom where "REGENT T.T." has proved so successful, it has become apparent that further plant additions to the refinery are needed and such plans are now being developed.

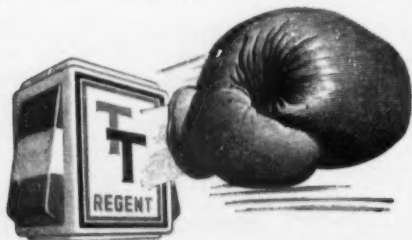
Development research on petrochemical products continued to be carried out and a wholly owned subsidiary was formed in Trinidad in December, 1953, for the manufacture and sale of petrochemicals.

The field activities of the company's Canadian subsidiary were directed towards acquiring and developing unexplored promising areas. A recent addition at its Port Credit, Toronto, refinery was a platforming unit. The subsidiary's distribution facilities expanded and the demand for REGENT products in Canada was very satisfactory.

In the United Kingdom, despite increasingly strong competition, good progress has been made by the marketing organisation through which the company's products are sold in the United Kingdom—Regent Oil Company Limited. That company's premium brand of petrol "REGENT T.T." has proved itself to be a product of outstanding quality, and one for which the motorist has indicated his preference in a most definite manner.

Sales of the Regent Oil Company's products continue to expand throughout the United Kingdom and Eire, and stockholders have seen for themselves the magnificent position that has been established.

The company's partners in these markets, California Texas Corporation, collaborate closely in the day to day affairs and policy of the Regent Oil Company, and their help and co-operation are greatly appreciated.



REGENT

PACKS PUNCH!



Oft touched by human hand

IN DAYS GONE BY, when disease could sweep unchecked through the land, foodstuffs were passed from hand to hand, exposed both to the elements and to passing dogs and flies. Now those 'good old days' are gone. Thanks to modern packaging and the use of brand names, our food is protected to a degree unknown to our ancestors.

Vital indeed is the part that packag-

ing has to play in the nation's economy. That is why the demand for "Thames Board" and "Fiberite" Cases is increasing. That is why Thames Board Mills are thinking ahead, planning new ways of increasing production. Already they produce over half the cardboard made in Britain. The new £9,000,000 extensions at Warrington, part of which is already in operation, confirm Thames Board Mills' leadership in this vital industry.



THAMES BOARD MILLS LIMITED

THE LARGEST MANUFACTURERS OF BOARD AND PACKING CASES IN BRITAIN

Purfleet, Essex and Warrington, Lancs.

"THAMES BOARD" for cartons, boxes, bookbinding, etc.

"FIBERITE" Packing Cases in solid and corrugated fibreboard.



Charming and functional

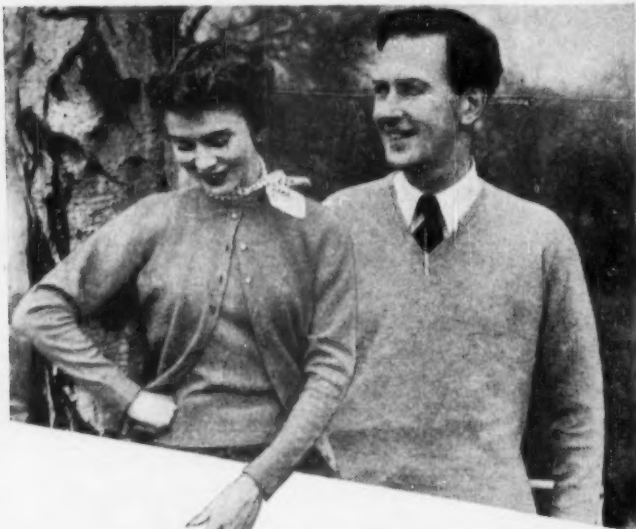
The Belling Medieval Fire is a product of traditional English craftsmanship combined with modern engineering skill. Whether your home is antique or contemporary in style, it will provide that indefinable atmosphere of cosiness which only an open fire can give—and without the waste of misdirected heat or the labour of dirty hearths.

With coal effect: £15.14.4 inc. tax · With logs effect: £18.9.0 inc. tax
This is only one of our extensive range of up-to-date heating appliances, obtainable through every Electrical Shop and Showroom.

Write to Belling & Co. Ltd., Bridge Works, Enfield, Middx. for our 64-page Catalogue, illustrating Belling Electric Fires, Cookers and other appliances for the Home.

You can't beat a "Belling"

CBC 147



... of singular excellence

Cashmere or lambswool, nourished by the proud Bordermen of Hawick in the tradition of yesteryear, blossoms into knitwear of singular excellence. It will not be found everyday and everywhere, but once discover it, and you will cherish and enjoy through the years its heritage of highborn loveliness. This Barrie treasure may be found, from time to time, only in the very best shops.

Barrie
KNITWEAR

BARRIE & KERSSEL LTD · HAWICK · SCOTLAND

Now with the date on the dial —the invincible Tudor!

THE new Tudor Prince Oysterdate 34 and 31, and the smaller Princess Oysterdate for women, are the latest addition to the Tudor series, sponsored by Rolex of Geneva.

These 3 models differ only in size. They are protected against dirt, dust, powder, perspiration and water by the famous Rolex waterproof Oyster case. A new Rolex-patented "rotor" mechanism winds them automatically. This "rotor" is suspension-sprung, making it proof against all

shock and vibration—formerly the arch-enemy of the self-winding watch. And in addition these models show the date clearly and automatically in a neat window cut in the dial.

Their 17 or 19 jewel movements are superbly accurate, reflecting fifty years of Rolex experience in making high precision watches. Yet the Prince and Princess Oysterdate cost less than any other watches possessing all these exclusive features. Ask to see them at your nearest Rolex jeweller.



THE TUDOR PRINCESS OYSTERDATE for women who like their watch both smart and accurate. It is exactly the same as the Prince Oysterdate except in size and styling. Swimproof in its Oyster case and self-wound by a suspension-sprung "rotor" it shows the date on the dial, changing each night at midnight.

THE TUDOR PRINCE OYSTERDATE 34 for the man who wants a rugged, accurate watch. The superbly accurate movement is protected by the swimproof Oyster case. A suspension-sprung "rotor" mechanism keeps it wound automatically, unaffected by the most severe vibrations. The date appears on the dial in a neat window.

THE TUDOR PRINCE OYSTERDATE 31 for the man who likes a slightly smaller watch than the 34. But otherwise it is identical—high-precision movement; swimproof Oyster case; self-winding "rotor," suspension-sprung against shock; and a date mechanism that shows the date clearly and automatically on the dial.



Prince Oysterdate **TUDOR** Princess Oysterdate

Sponsored by Rolex of Geneva

GOOD COMPANY



MR. HORNIMAN

established his packet tea

business in 1826 to serve

the public with fine

tea in fair measure.

To this day, his high
standards are enjoyed by
people of discernment.

MR. PUNCH

has been a symbol of

British humour since

1841. Ever shrewd, witty,

endearing, his weekly

Charivari always gives

pleasure to lovers

of rich humour.



HORNIMANS

Rich and Fragrant

W. H. & F. J. HORNIMAN & CO. LTD., SHEPHERDESS WALK, LONDON, N.1



"My dear, I led a dog's life
till they had an Agamatic put in."

AGA HEAT LIMITED

102/113 Orchard House, Orchard Street, London, W.1.
The word 'Agamatic' is a Registered Trade Mark of Aga Heat Ltd.
(Proprietors: Allied Ironfounders Ltd.)



REGD TRADE MARK

*If you know
someone who deserves one
more than you, Buy Two!*

There is no more luxurious a
hot water bottle than the Cosimax.
Covered with a smooth velvet plush, it
is soft and warm to the touch. And
Cosimax keeps warmer longer, too.
You owe one to yourself and
your friends this Christmas.

PRICE: 26/6 EACH

From all Good Class
Chemists and Stores.



Cosimax

DUNLOP RUBBER COMPANY LIMITED

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More B.O.A.C. world-famed
Constellations
 along all routes east!

★ MIDDLE EAST ★ SOUTH AFRICA ★ FAR EAST ★ AUSTRALIA

Now in service!		Soon in service!	
To: BANGKOK	JOHANNESBURG	To: ABADAN	DUSSELDORF
SEIRUT	KARACHI	BAGHDAD	HONG KONG
BOMBAY	KHARTOUM	BAHRAIN	KUWAIT
CAIRO	NAIROBI	BASRA	LIVINGSTONE
CALCUTTA	ROME	DAMASCUS	RANGOON
COLOMBO	SINGAPORE	DELHI	TOKYO
DARWIN	SYDNEY		
FRANKFURT	ZURICH		
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(Service to South Africa in association with S.A.A.; to Australia in association with Qantas).

Speed, luxury, dependability. Enjoy all three when you fly east by B.O.A.C. First Class Constellations. Limited passenger list ensures more room, comfort, personal service. These four-engined airliners are fully pressurized to fly high above the weather. You relax in the deep comfort of fully reclining "slumberseats", enjoy delicious free meals and attentive service. Fly B.O.A.C. Constellation—enjoy air travel to the east at its best!

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Consult your local B.O.A.C. Appointed Agent or B.O.A.C. Airways Terminal, Victoria, S.W.1 (VIC 2323); 75 Regent St., W.1 (MAY 6611); or offices in Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool (see your Telephone Directory for details).

B.O.A.C. TAKES GOOD CARE OF YOU

FLY ➔ B.O.A.C

BRITISH OVERSEAS AIRWAYS CORPORATION WITH QANTAS & S.A.A.

The Christmas present
 for your Particular friends
THE "THREE CASTLES"
 CIGARETTES



ATTRACTIVELY WRAPPED
 FOR CHRISTMAS

50 CIGARETTES 9/9½d
 100 CIGARETTES 19/7d

W. D. & H. O. Wills, Branch of The Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain & Ireland), Ltd. TT277F



The World's most economical

warehouse

As adopted by the Admiralty, Ministry of Works, Ministry of Supply and Foreign Governments.

Frame construction in tubular steel and high tensile cable, Buckwyn metal tiled in aluminium or steel with or without insulation for all climatic conditions. Complete buildings from 7/6 sq. ft. delivered on site or F.O.B. or 9/- sq. ft. erected.

PATENTED BUILDINGS
 Areas
 10,000 to
 50,000 sq. ft.

Full particulars from
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*In the race
 for economy
 BUCKWYN
 wins!*

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 CONSTRUCTIONS LTD.
 TWYFORD, BERKS, ENGLAND

Tel.
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A YEAR OF EXPANSION

SIR LEONARD P. LORD, K.B.E., Chairman and Managing Director, presided at the Third Annual General Meeting of The British Motor Corporation Limited which was held on the 16th December, 1954, at Longbridge, Birmingham.

The following are extracts from his address which was circulated to shareholders with the Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st July, 1954:

The year has been a good one in every respect and I am sure you will consider the results satisfactory, but figures alone cannot show the continuous progress which has been made in the development of your factories nor tell the story of the truly remarkable Engineering and Production feats which your Staffs have accomplished.

For these achievements our thanks are due to our Employees at every level of responsibility. To those thanks I would like to add my personal congratulations.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Plans for extension in the Motor Industry, involving tens of millions of pounds, have been very much in the news recently, and I am sure you expect me to say something in this regard.

You will recall that in 1952, at the time of the Merger, the Austin Motor Company and the Nuffield Organisation were two complete and separate manufacturing entities, with Design Offices, Machine Shops, Foundries, Body Works, etc. One of the attractions of the fusion was the immediate opportunity it presented for standardisation of components, leading to intensified manufacture with a resultant saving of over 1,000,000 square feet of floor space and its attendant economies. As evidenced by the models now in production, this programme of rationalisation and the standardisation of B.M.C. units has been successfully carried out.

This has involved the uprooting, transfer and re-installation in different factories of large masses of machinery, together with the introduction of hundreds of new machines and processes. Since the moves began two years ago about 15,000 machines have been installed or rearranged. In spite of all this new models have been introduced, and at the same time Production has been steadily increased.

AN EXAMPLE OF SPACE SAVING

An interesting example of space saving is provided by those B.M.C. Series Engines made at Longbridge. Current production is 8,000 Engines a week from less space than was required for half that number three years ago. Similar savings have been made in your other factories producing axles, transmissions, etc., with the result that greatly increased production has been obtained without the addition of new buildings. On the contrary, considerable demolition and site clearing have taken place.

By late Spring of next year over-all output should rise from the present 8,000 up to 10,000 vehicles a week plus spares. Thus, in under three years, production will have been more than doubled, using less space, with all the most modern machinery installed. At the same time, almost unnoticed, the many millions of expenditure involved will have been provided by the ploughing back of Profits.

Thus my Report to you is not of a series of forward surges involving enormous sums of money, with delays at each stage, but rather of smooth, carefully controlled and very rapid expansion with a regular current of Capital Expenditure budgeted for and provided as needed.

PLANS TO RAISE OUTPUT

Market Research and Sales experience now suggest that further expansion should be put in hand, and plans have been approved and expenditure sanctioned by your Board which will raise output to 2,500 vehicles a day

eighteen months from now. This involves the purchase of additional machinery and the erection of some new buildings at Longbridge, Cowley, Tractors & Transmissions Branch, Birmingham, and Fisher & Ludlow, Birmingham.

At this stage it seems that a proportionately small amount of fresh Capital could be usefully employed. You will see from the Directors' Report that the Ordinary Shareholders are to be given the opportunity of providing this Capital on attractive terms.

Your Board are alert to the world-wide trends in our industry, and are keenly aware of the competition likely to be encountered in the future. To meet it successfully we shall have the very latest modern plant with every conceivable labour-aiding device, laid out in the most efficient way, occupying the absolute minimum of floor space together with the highest standard of working conditions, and carrying the lowest possible burden of overheads.

Production: The total vehicle despatches for the year under review were 353,834, an increase of 27 per cent over the previous year. Of these vehicles 183,749 went to the Home Market and 170,085 to Export.

HOME MARKET

The Home Market continues buoyant, with long waiting lists for every model, both of Cars and Commercial Vehicles, and this, coupled with the Export demand, makes it clear that your factories will be able to run at full capacity for the next twelve months. At the same time, the increasing number of vehicles being put on to the roads of Britain will cause still greater congestion, and there is no doubt that the enormous problem of new road construction must be tackled vigorously and with imagination in the immediate future.

OVERSEAS

Building to provide additional assembly space is still going on at the Plant in Sydney, Australia.

Plant is being installed for Engine production in the new building recently completed for that purpose. This will be capable of turning out 1,000 "B" type Engines per week by September next year. Another Factory, of 200,000 square feet with 20 acres of land, has recently been bought at Fishermen's Bend, Melbourne, and this will be equipped for the production of Austin and Morris Vehicles.

I mentioned last year that the factory buildings near Cape Town, South Africa, were completed ready for occupation. I am now glad to say that permission to make a start with the installation of equipment has recently been received from the South African Government and production in small quantities should be under way by June next year.

NEW MODELS AND DEVELOPMENTS

During the year several new models have been announced and have met with immediate success.

A range of B.M.C. Diesel Engines has been put into production and is proving eminently satisfactory.

You will have seen reports on the Austin Gas Turbine fitted into a Sheerline Car. Development on this and on Gas Turbines for industrial purposes is proceeding apace, and further interesting developments can be expected in the next year or two. During the year World Records for Endurance and Speed have been taken both by M.G. Cars and Austin Healeys.

I expect competition to become more keen during the next year or two, but I believe our prospects are excellent and in the absence of any adverse unforeseen circumstances the current year should produce results at least as good as those at present under review.

The report and accounts were adopted.



THE BRITISH MOTOR CORPORATION LIMITED

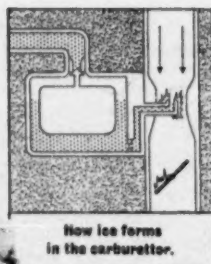
Principal Subsidiary Companies

THE AUSTIN MOTOR COMPANY LTD. MORRIS MOTORS LTD. WOLSELEY MOTORS LTD. RILEY MOTORS LTD.
THE M.G. CAR COMPANY LTD. FISHER & LUDLOW LTD. VANDEN PLAS (England) 1923 LTD.

You can't beat **instant starting, anti-icing** **WINTER GRADE**



Finest in quality, foremost in value, that's Winter Grade Esso Extra—Britain's unbeatable winter grade petrol. It gives all cars split-second starting, faster warm-up, lightning acceleration and—thanks to Esso's **PATENTED** anti-icing feature—complete freedom from all forms of carburettor icing, loss of power and engine stalling from this cause. For maximum performance, minimum petrol consumption and outstanding engine cleanliness at all times, at all temperatures, always insist on Winter Grade Esso Extra—try it and prove it today.



How ice forms
in the carburettor.

In some modern car engines rapid vaporisation of highly volatile petrol freezes moisture in the air and builds up ice formation in the choke area of the carburettor. This restricts the air flow causing an increase in petrol consumption, loss of power and, in extreme cases, engine stalling. This cannot happen with Esso Extra Winter Grade.



The addition of Esso's exclusive new anti-icing feature plus valve-protecting N.S.O. gives Esso Extra a combination of qualities unmatched anywhere in the world.

THE FINEST PETROL IN THE WORLD



CHARIVARIA

R EPORTS of Mr. O'Brien's appointment as Chief Cashier of the Bank referred to his "great Irish charm." It's certainly going to take a touch of the blarney to persuade us that his signature on a pound note is really worth twenty shillings.

The Other Half

EVEN the marvel of wireless telegraphy has not entirely superseded the printed word as a medium of international understanding. Readers of *Dawn*, a West Pakistan daily, learned



recently that Ralph Vaughan Williams is "the only living magician who has received the British Order of Merit," and that the findings of the Comet inquiry were to go before "Mr. John Boy, carpenter in the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation."

Good King Wenceslas, Look Out

WIDESPREAD indignation has been caused in America by the announcement by a Springfield, Ohio, man that he intends to "shoot Santa Claus," and a municipal judge has said sternly that if the threat is carried out the assassin will be "tried by a jury consisting entirely of children." You have only to glance down the prices in any good toy catalogue to see that no other jury would convict.

No Audience Participation

ANOTHER example of the B.B.C.'s habit of missing a good thing occurred when an announcer lost an earring and knew nothing about it until viewers rang up to tell her. At her next appearance she thanked them prettily and described how she had found it on the

studio floor—but no one thought of providing close-ups of the floor so that anxious viewers could join in the search.

Nothing to Eat, Thanks

WITH the season of over-indulgence upon us, any deterrent to excess deserves a welcome, and readers of *The British Food Journal* will have profited by items in a recent edition under the following headings:

Bread Containing a Nail
Fly in Cake
Safety-pin in Loaf
Mouse in Milk
Larvæ in Ham
Adhesive Tape in Bread
Mould in Steak Pie
Tin in Tinned Rhubarb

Further reports likely to curb the appetite refer to the sale of caraway seed containing mouse droppings, apples contaminated with lead arsenate and porridge oats containing meal-fly eggs. It is to be hoped that the effect of all this will not be reversed by a less discouraging item entitled "Meat in Pork Sausages."

Just What You Wanted

AMONG Christmas gift hints lately passed on by a gossip-writer is one contained in a circular from a cosmetics



firm: "If your girl friend's lack of curves puts you off, the answer lies with you—a Christmas present of a course in beauty overhaul." No doubt a gaily packaged first-aid set goes with it for the donor's personal use.

Thieves' Kitchen

CRIMINAL circles were much concerned to read about the recent case in Northumberland, when costs paid by

the defendants, found guilty of stealing and receiving building materials, included seven pounds paid out by the local authorities for dismantling a kitchen constructed with the stolen equipment; it failed to conform with the by-laws. There is a good deal of speculation whether criminals specializing in this kind of job can cite the necessary instructional literature as a chargeable expense against income tax.

Inscrutable East

ORDERS for fifty thousand suits of full evening dress are reported to have been placed by Russia with Finnish and Swedish tailoring firms. Even expert



commentators on Soviet behaviour can make little or nothing of this; one suggestion, however, is that it heralds intensified M.V.D. surveillance of Moscow night life.

Wish for a Newsprint Cut

IN the early stages of its competition for the three "gayest and most original" Christmas wishes the *Daily Express* printed a stimulating selection from the "many hundreds" sent in; they dealt mostly with shopping and washing-up. The feeling among deviationist minorities in the Editorial Department was that if this was the gayest and most original that readers could manage they deserved competitions like this.

Give Me a Look Some Time

GRADUALLY the sanctity of the home is being invaded and overrun. Last week, at Hull, a "television telephone" was demonstrated which enabled caller and caller to come face to face. However,

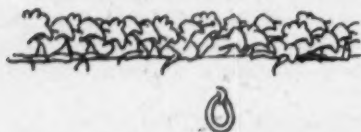
in time no doubt we shall conquer the lifetime's habit of saying "How nice to hear your voice," and rolling up our eyes in malice, hatred and contempt. And of course it will be wonderful to ignore the bell when it rings at bathtime.

Away From It All

INMATES of British prisons must have hugged themselves to read that convicts in a California gaol are petitioning the authorities for week-end passes. Over here, you choose your own days off.

Banish Boredom at Brightsea

COUNCIL workers at Ventnor, Isle of Wight, reports the *Daily Mail*, have been trying since last Easter to fill up



a hole in the road. Rival resorts are getting suspicious by this time, and are planning to start a permanent hole of their own to attract fascinated visitors.

The Brain-Washers

SUPPOSE Big Brother's ugly mug
Were televised by I.T.A.
What sort of advertising plug
Would best accord with such a
play?
You've no idea? Oh, have a
shot,
If only just the wildest guess:
Why not the purchase of a "spot"
By sections of the Sunday Press?



NINETEEN EIGHTY-FIVE

FOLLOWING last Sunday's television broadcast of Barrie's play *Peter Pan*, a group of Labour M.P.s, led by Mr. Arthur Bumber, have tabled a motion in the House of Commons. This "deplores the tendency in recent B.B.C. programmes, especially in the Children's Hour, to pander to violent and sadistic tastes."

Mr. Bumber said "I do not deny that this is directed against *Peter Pan*. Although nauseated beyond bearing by the filth and cruelty masquerading as entertainment in this so-called play, my wife and I watched it all through." The play was a morass of violence and immorality. There were scenes of a father deceiving his children, of a small girl pierced through the body with an arrow, and of prejudicial treatment of coloured people by European pirates. A young lad was threatened with having his scalp removed from his head without an anaesthetic. A criminal announced that he would tear the flesh of his adversaries with a metal hook shaped like a claw. Later this character was eaten alive by a crocodile.

Referring to the B.B.C.'s statement that an announcement was made at the beginning of Children's Hour to the effect that *Peter Pan* was unsuitable for adults, and that they were advised to switch off, it was not enough, said Mr. Bumber, simply to advise people to switch off. Many viewers were old folk who watched from armchairs, and they could not be expected to cross the room and manipulate a switch simply to gratify the depraved tastes of some intellectuals at Lime Grove who were completely out of touch with the majority of ordinary decent people.

It was later announced that a group of Conservative M.P.s led by Sir John Woollam had tabled an amendment to Mr. Bumber's motion. This amendment proposes to "delete all the words after 'tendency' and substitute 'of Members of this House to deprive the younger generation of wholesome and stimulating entertainment whenever it does not accord with their political tenets.'"

"Far from being violent and sadistic," Sir John said, "I thought *Peter Pan* set a high moral tone throughout. Emphasis was laid on the sanctity of family life,

the virtue of kindness to animals and the punishment of wrong-doing. There was also a healthy bias in favour of free enterprise. Of course, it was a bit exciting in parts, but it must be remembered that the play was not written for adults."

An amendment to Sir John's amendment has been tabled by the two Liberal Members of the House of Commons. This proposes to "delete all the words after 'deplores' and substitute 'the action of the B.B.C. in advocating the unrestricted switching-off of Government-sponsored television.'"

"I have had a large number of letters from my constituents," said Mr. Llewellyn Owen, leader of the Parliamentary Liberals, "and though none of them approves in principle of the transmission of Sunday television, a great majority believes that if it is to take place at all it must do so under Government auspices, so that restraint can be applied whenever we in Parliament think it desirable." There was no special objection to *Peter Pan*, he said, though it was doubtful if a play depending so much on naked realism and propaganda was ideal for family viewing. "I think it would be a great pity if we ever grew away from our national tradition of Sunday vaudeville," Mr. Owen said.

Late last night, still another amendment was handed in to the table, this time by a group of Independents led by the veteran General Sir Harry Legge-Bourke. It proposes to delete the whole of Mr. Owen's amendment and to substitute: "That this House applauds the B.B.C.'s advocacy of compulsory training in arms, as exemplified in the play *Peter Pan*."

Many more M.P.s are expected to rally to one side or the other, and Mr. Bumber has announced that he will introduce a Private Member's Bill under the "ten-minute rule" next Wednesday. It is not thought that the Government will find time for a second reading.

"I am glad to hear," Mr. Bumber said, "that the play is to be serialized in a national daily newspaper, so that everyone in the country may have a chance to see how utterly revolting and un-British it is."

Peter Pan is to be repeated on Thursday night. B. A. Y.



My friend Jack Smith is one of the nicest and kindest fellows in the world—



and his sister Sue is just about the sweetest and most unselfish person alive:



his young brother Bill is quite the best-tempered and most thoughtful boy I know—



and no one was ever so gentle or so humane as his Cousin Mary:

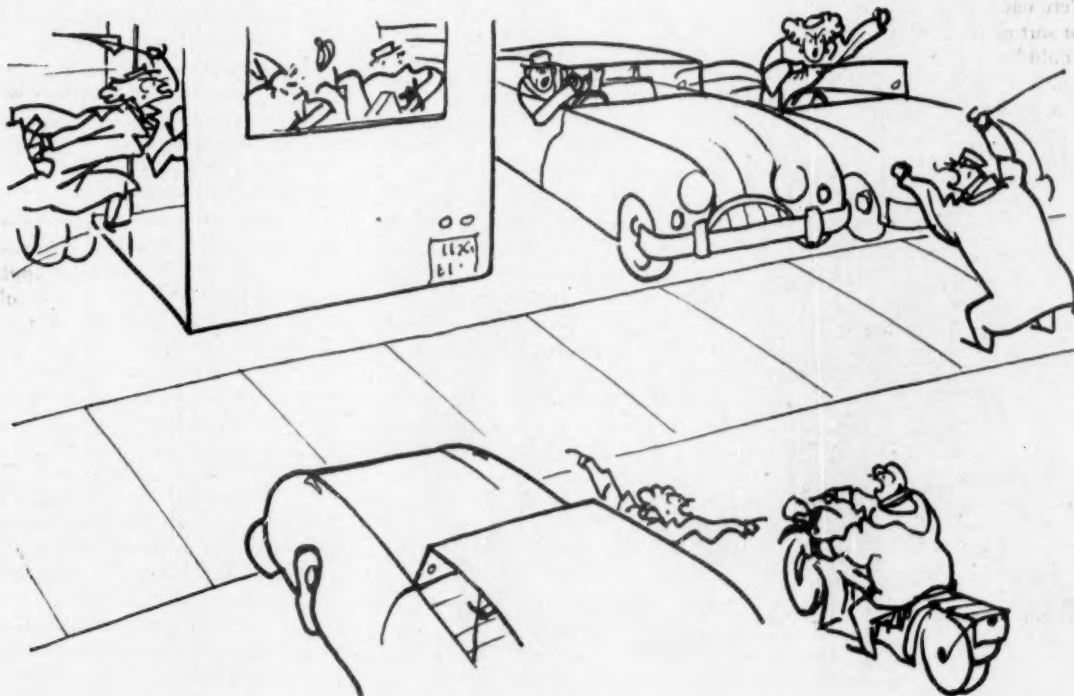


his Uncle George is the very spirit of genial, warm-hearted generosity—



while his Aunt Julia is always just as patient and as tolerant and as charitable and as helpful to others as anyone could possibly be:

but, as a matter of fact, I expect you've probably already met them—



on the road.

One for the Archives

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

PARIS
December 20, 1956

Ambassador to Foreign Secretary

NO doubt you will shortly receive the report of your Senior Inspector, summarizing his findings on Embassy expenditure here. As he seemed unfavourably impressed on several points, and his official *questionnaire* made no provision for explanatory comments from me, I venture to offer the following supplementary information.

BICYCLES

I have admitted to maintaining two bicycles here, which is one in excess of establishment. The second machine,

however, was obtained *de seconde main* for Fr.3500—a cost already recovered in the saving in tram and bus fares by the third secretary—and is in any case essential in case of breakdowns by my own machine. It is not, in my opinion, compatible with H.M. Ambassador's high office to go about his official duties on foot, which at one time was made necessary whenever I had a puncture. (I have, however, conceded to your Inspector the abandonment of my three-speed gear, which will be disposed of as promised and the proceeds remitted to the Treasury.)

FURNISHINGS

Fault was found with my bedroom equipment, and three clothes-hangers

with trouser-bars would, I was told, be reported as excessive. While not disputing your Inspector's view that even Diplomatic trousers of the present inferior material could without harm be kept over a chair or the end of the bed, I feel bound to state that these items are in fact my own property, bought out of my own savings. With respect, therefore, I decline to part with them. The same applies to the blue leather horseshoe-shaped stud-box and collar-box to match, which I have had ever since Belgrade.

ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Your Inspector called at my office just after the Brazilian Minister had left it, and I must disown responsibility for the aroma of cigar-smoke which was present. Your Inspector doubted my assurances on this, I fancy, though a search through my desk and cabinets revealed only my few packets of *Gaulois* kept for special occasions. In the circumstances I thought it permissible to explain my situation to the Brazilian Minister, who obligingly swore an affidavit that the cigar-smoke was his: this document I attach at Appendix A to this memorandum.

Consumption of alcohol at this Embassy is restricted to the scale laid down last year as a result of the findings of the Select Committee on Estimates—viz. one dozen bottled beer weekly, allocated by ballot throughout the staff. The two empty *Beaune* half-bottles found by your Inspector in the passport room were the result of hospitality extended the week before to a delegation of Indian Princes, and have now been returned to the *bistro*; allowance on the bottles will be credited in the ordinary course, and a signed undertaking is attached at Appendix B.

ENTERTAINMENT

I should like to reiterate that economies as laid down are regularly observed. A certain amount of entertaining by the Embassy is unavoidable, though every effort is made, where possible, to conduct this on the premises of other Ambassadors, thus avoiding heating and lighting costs. Where no convincing excuse can be found for such transference of *venue*, however,



"Looks very much as if they've started economizing already."

I invariably issue invitations for after-dinner hours, and let it be known through informal channels that guests should, where possible, bring their own refreshment. The Russians are usually extremely co-operative in this, and the bottle of *vodka* discovered by your Inspector in the upstairs cloakroom was an unintended legacy from the Soviet Ambassador. A point of some diplomatic complexity occurs in connection with this; to return it might give offence, but on the other hand I do not feel justified in disposing of it for cash. Your ruling would be appreciated. (The report will mention, I trust, that the downstairs cloakroom has been locked up, with considerable economy in soap, towel-laundry and other cognate expenditure.)

SPECIAL FUND DISBURSEMENTS

I am at a loss to see, sir, how further economies can be effected under this head. Already a number of possibly valuable intelligence items, once offered to this Embassy, are being diverted to quarters where the reward is greater. C. for CHARLIE (S.F.D. CODE A/L) has brought nothing since the CURLEW reactor secrets, and the last report from W for WALTER contained, as you commented at the time, nothing but the drainage plan for workers' flats at Magnitogorsk. I do not wonder at this. Even when we were paying Fr.500 per dozen information units there was discontent among these valued friends, and the new scale is much inferior. I admit that I secured the PEAHEN defence documents by giving away one of my knickerbocker suits as a bonus, while the FGH submarine engine (DUCKWEED) was secured in return for the second secretary's copy of *The Hinge of Fate* over and above the specified fee—but it seems to me that adequate provision should be made at a higher level. Intelligence cannot be obtained to-day in return for beads and looking-glasses, even if I felt able to persuade our female secretarial staff to make such sacrifices.

SHOE REPAIRS

Every economy is being borne in mind. It is over two years since any footwear of mine has been a charge on the Treasury, and four members of my staff are at this writing going about their diplomatic duties in lacquered cricket-boots.



"... On the festa Stephen ..."

MAINTENANCE OF PREMISES AND GARDENS

As requested by your Inspector, the rose-walk, terrace and both lower lawns are now in process of conversion to vegetables. I particularly asked that the front of the house should be permitted to retain its lawn for appearances' sake, but no undertaking was given. May I know your wishes? The order for exterior repainting of the Embassy, which had already been given to a firm of decorators at the time of your Inspector's visit, has now been rescinded. My staff and I will undertake the work ourselves, and I have every hope that our good friend the Ecuadorian Minister will be able to supply us with materials left over from a recent repainting of his Legation. I have already spoken to him on this matter when, luckily as it turned out, his chauffeur

ran into my bicycle in the Place de la Concorde last week and slightly damaged the carrier (see repairs bill, attached at Appendix C). I fear that there will be some small expense for turpentine, however, and in the present state of the staff's wardrobe I am emboldened to add a request for overalls. I am sure that this would prove an economy in the long run.

CONCLUSION

I look forward, sir, to a visit from you whenever circumstances prove propitious, so that you can see what very real efforts are being made here to reduce unnecessary extravagance. You would not, I am sure, object to sleeping on my sitting-room sofa, as our spare rooms are of course let out at present (Your FO/EC/6.55).

I remain, etc.

I'm in the Book

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

IN the life of every man living in New York and subscribing to the New York Telephone service there comes a moment when he has to face a problem squarely and make a decision. Shall he—or, alternatively, shall he not—have his name in the book? There is no middle course. Either you are in the book or you aren't.

I am in myself. I suppose it was that wish we all have to see our names in print that made me do it. That and wanting to have something good to read in the long winter evenings. For unquestionably it reads well.

Wodehouse, P.G. 1000 PkAv . . . BUtrfld 8-5029
Much better, it seems to me—zippier

is perhaps the word I want—than Wodak, Norma L 404E51 . . . MUryhil 8-4376, which comes immediately before it, and Wodicka, Geo D 807ColbsAv . . . MOnumnt 6-4933, which comes immediately after. Both are good enough in their way, but they are not Wodehouse, P. G. 1000PkAv . . . BUtrfld 8-5029. In moods of depression I often turn to the well-thumbed page, and it always puts new heart into me. "Wodehouse, P. G.," I say to myself. "1000 PkAv," I say to myself. "BUtrfld 8-5029," I say to myself. "Pretty good, pretty good."

But—or as we fellows in the book say, BUt—there is a catch. I have got

publicity of the right sort and my winter evening reading is all arranged for, but when people, curled up in the old armchair with their New York Telephone Directory, see "Wodehouse, P. G. 1000 PkAv . . . BUtrfld 8-5029," it puts ideas into their heads. Briefly, I have become—especially at this time of year, with Christmas at our throats—a sitting duck for every toucher on the island of Manhattan. These divide themselves into the Breezy and the Portentous.

The Breezy (light tenor voice):

"Mr. Wodehouse?"

"Speaking."

"Hullo there, P.G., old man, how are you, how *are* you? Fine? Fine. That's fine. No colds, coughs or rheumatic ailments? Splendid. That's wonderful. This is the Rev. Cyril Twombly. You won't know my name, but I am one of your greatest fans and I simply couldn't resist the urge to call you up and tell you how much I love your books. I think I've read every line you have written. Great stuff, P.G., great stuff. Jeeves! Ha ha ha ha ha!"

Come, come, I am saying to myself by this time, this is extremely gratifying. One lives for one's Art, of course, and cares little for praise or blame, but still it is nice to feel that one's efforts are appreciated. Furthermore—though one is too spiritual to give much thought to that—a man as enthusiastic as this will surely buy a copy of that book of ours that is coming out next month, which means forty-five cents in our kick, and may quite possibly give copies to friends. (Five friends? Ten friends? Better be on the safe side and call it five. Well, that is \$2.25, and you can buy a lot of tobacco for \$2.25.)

But hark, he is proceeding.

"That was why I rang you, P.G. I just wanted to tell you what pleasure you have given to me and I am sure a great many other people . . . and—oh yes—there was one other thing. Our church is getting up a Christmas bazaar and we are hoping you will . . ."

The Portentous (deep bass voice):

"Mr. Wodehouse?"

"Speaking."

"God bless you, my son. This is Father Orlo Quackenbush. Our church is getting up a Christmas bazaar . . ."



"Trouble with you is, Grimson, you've suffered too much."

In theory the unlisted subscriber avoids all this. If you try to get a number that is not in the book, Information pins your ears back good and proper. "Sorrrrrr-eeeeee, we are not allowed to give out that numbah," says Information. But the trouble is, the unlisted boys tell me, that you keep giving it out yourself—to casual acquaintances who write it down and give it to their casual acquaintances who write it down and . . . but you get the idea. Pretty soon it is public property. The late Russell Maloney, dealing with this subject, mentions an unlisted friend of his who, totting up the score after a certain period of time, found that his number was in the possession of eleven girls he no longer liked any more, forty-three people he had never liked, a former business associate who was suing him at the moment, a discarded masseur, three upholsterers who had made estimates for re-covering a sofa, and an unidentified alcoholic who rang up regularly and always between the hours of two and three in the morning.

It was Mr. Maloney, also, who, while admitting that the unlisted had their troubles, put his finger on one grave objection to being in the book—viz. that you thereby become a social out-cast, scorned and sneered at by the swells who have unlisted numbers, the inference being that you can't be very hot if you aren't important enough to keep your number a secret confined to a small private circle.

It may be so. Nevertheless, I shall continue to instruct the brass hats of the system to publish my name and telephone number. (Wodehouse, P. G. 1000 PkAv . . . BUtrfld 8-5029, in case you have forgotten). A fig, if I may use the expression, for the snobs who will look down on me. What is good enough for Aaklus, Valborg E., for the AAAAA-AABEE Moving and Storage Company, for Zwolow, Irving, for Zyttenfeld, Saml, and for the ZZZZZY ZTAMP ZSTUDIO CORPn is good enough for me.

Rugged, I suppose you would call mɛ, No frills. Rather the Abe Lincoln type.



"The wife's taken mine: our pressure cooker's bust."

A Ballade for a Christmas Card

CHRISTMAS is here, with all that Christmas means;

The harassed housewives in the Gift Bazaar
Present their offspring—tots, or in their teens—

To parboiled Santas, feeling under par.
And tiny, tiresome toddlers start to spar,
Demanding space-guns with a lethal ray;
You can't get near the West End in a car . . .
Because a Child is born again to-day.

The chorus girls rehearse their tap-routines,
Each one resplendent as a toy hussar,
While forty slapstick thieves are stealing scenes
And Ali Baba gets a nasty jar.
The backcloth's rich with palm and deodar
And hollyhocks—eccentric, but (they say)
Traditional; as pantos always are . . .
Because a Child is born again to-day.

The bookstalls glaze with glossier magazines,
Students deliver cards from near and far,
The pubs are hung with wilting evergreens,
Canned carollers are moaning at the bar.
The radios reopen last year's scar—
That rosy-tinted reindeer's here to stay—
And Tin Pan Alley lights a fresh cigar . . .
Because a Child is born again to-day.

Prince of the dusk, benighted Balthazar,
Above the shimmer of the shadow-play
The skies are clear. Look up, and see the Star . . .
Because a Child is born again to-day.

PETER LING

"Television: 3: Night Train to Danger.
3.30: Breeding Time. 5: Children."
Lancashire Evening Post

And they shouldn't be watching.

Experiment in Compression

(From "A Pocket Pickwick," by W. Somerset)

IT was shortly after supper that I found myself sitting beside Winkle.

No doubt I was drawn to him by the fact that, unlike most of the other members of the party, he was comparatively sober. I had just yielded to the drunken persistence of my host, Wardle, and accepted my fifth glass of wassail, and I remember wondering, as I replied without much enthusiasm to his maudlin ramblings, how I could manage to dispose of it unnoticed.

"Everyone sits down with us on Christmas Eve," said Wardle thickly, "just as you see them now, servants and all, and here we wait until the clock strikes twelve, to usher Christmas in, and beguile the time with storfeits and old fories."

"It's a good plan."

"A happy Christmas! God bless us every one!"

"Yes."

"Fill up, man! It will be two hours, good, before you see the bottom of the bowl through the deep, rich colour of the wassail."

"I shouldn't have thought it would be so long."

"A Christmas song! I'll give you one, in default of a better!"

"All right."

At this point Pickwick lurched forward and attempted to slap Wardle on the back, missed his aim, and came within an ace of falling into the fire. I took advantage of the momentary confusion to withdraw myself a little from the centre of the festivities, and, as I have said, it was beside Winkle that I sat down a moment later. His first words startled me by their intensity.

"I can't stand it," he said. "I can't stand it."

"It's only once a year."

"Not with Pickwick, Tupman and Snodgrass. They're always at it. Those awful coach journeys! Brandy, rum, strong ale—it's a nightmare, I tell you! They turn nasty if you refuse. Mind you, I don't swallow a quarter of what I'm offered—not now. I've had a sort of rubber bulb made, and I keep it under my waistcoat. Pitiful, isn't it? They're in a stupor half the time, and it's quite possible, by a little sleight of hand—"

"Will this thing hold half a pint of wassail?"

"I'm sorry, it's full of punch and Madeira. Give it to Weller, quietly. He's been a good friend to me in that way more than once."

"If you don't like these fellows, why go about with them?"

"I have to. They've got a sort of hold over me. They know something no one else must know. But I'm beginning to get desperate. It's not so much the drinking and the awful, never-ending heartiness—it's the mad things they do. They simply can't turn round without getting into some revolting imbroglio. Take Pickwick. He's been arrested, he's been sued for breach of promise, he's had a fight with a cabman, he's been thrown out of some unfortunate woman's bedroom in Ipswich. He doesn't mind. He takes things like that in his stride. To me they're agony. How would you like to be chased round Bath in your dressing-gown by a madman with a carving-knife?"

"Not much."

"Mind you, I got no sympathy from Pickwick. He actually seemed to think I'd disgraced them all in some way. But when he's found hiding in a girls' school at midnight, that's nothing—just boyish high spirits. He'd better

look out, though, or I'll be doing something I shall regret. I came pretty close to it only the other day."

"How was that?"

"Wardle and I were shooting. I was just raising my gun to my shoulder when I happened to catch sight of Pickwick, beaming away in that sickeningly benevolent way of his. Suddenly something seemed to snap in my head, and before I knew where I was I'd aimed at him and pulled the trigger."

"What happened?"

"I hit Tupman."

I was silent. After all, it was no affair of mine. Wardle was now hiccupping up some garbled tale about a man named Grub, and Pickwick was listening with an air of drunken profundity. It seemed an opportune moment to slip away unnoticed.

* * * * *

It was well before noon when I left Dingley Dell on the following day, yet already Wardle was glassy-eyed and lachrymose. I thought that he would have shaken my hand for ever.

"Breakings-up are capital things in our schooldays, but in after life they are painful enough."

"Yes."

"Death, self-interest, and fortune's changes are every day breaking up many a happy group and wattering them scar and fide."

"I suppose so."

"You'll split half a dozen of port before you go?"

"No, thanks."

I got away at last, after shaking a dozen hands and having my back slapped with such violence that I had some difficulty in maintaining my footing. I consoled myself with the reflection that in all probability I should never again set eyes upon Pickwick or any of the whole bibulous crew. But I was mistaken.

T. S. WATT

6 6

"Swinburne's April laughing her girlish laughter, 'weeping her girlish tears' . . ."
The Times

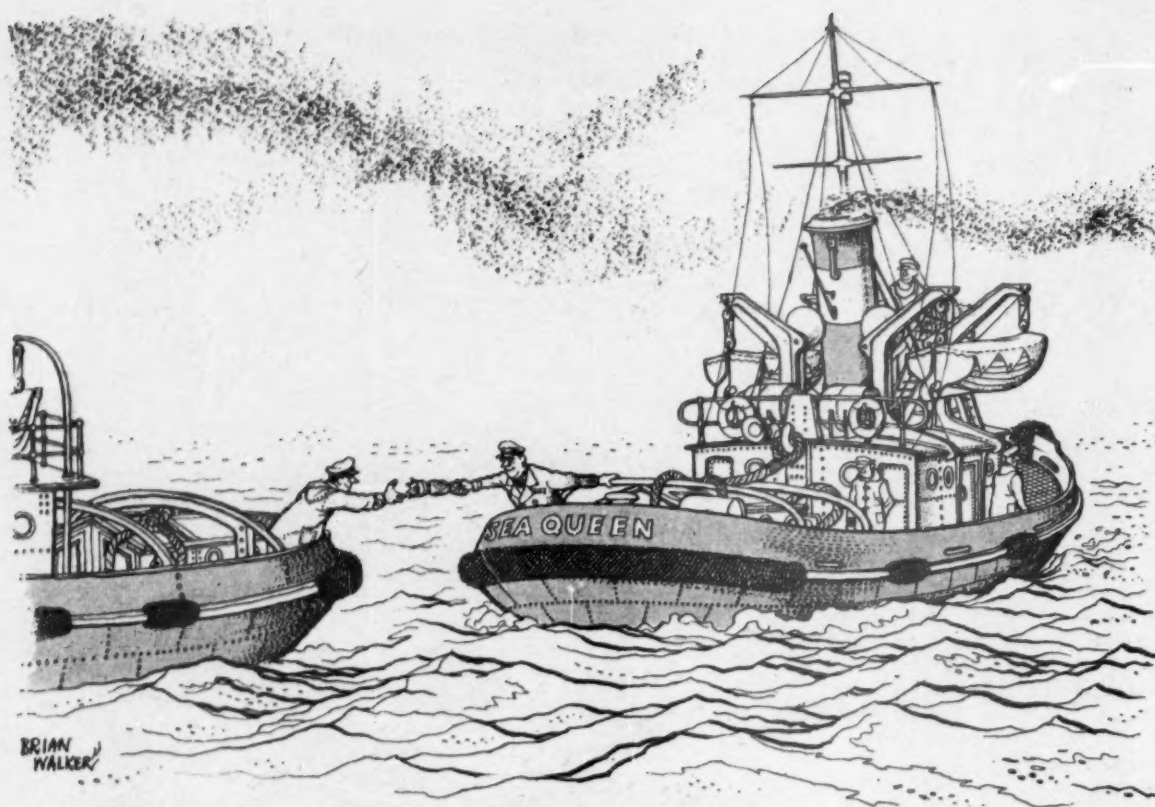
And Sir William Watson having a good cry too.



"Look what I found on top of the wardrobe."



"That's my idea of a Christmas card."



Christmas with the MoS (Radar)

At the Min of Supply (radar) depot at Coghill, Glos., where Senior Electrical Research Officers are not allowed to mend their own fuses, Jackson and Manders, the apologists of the régime, have had another experience which has driven them to apply for a change of hostel.

Leaves from Jackson's diary, Dec. 26
SHORTLY after Manders and I came to Whitecliffs an economy drive was instituted. Geysers were installed above all baths in lieu of connection to the copper boiler which was sent in to become terminals.

At about the same time the Monks Rd bldg was condemned by Works because the ceiling was an inch too low and failed to conform with the Peoples Hygiene Act 1947. The residents were divided up. We were allocated Funk.

Manders broke the news to me in the break, thus: "I'm afraid I've got rather a fast ball for you, Jack. We've been allocated Funk."

I said "I'm out for a duck."

We consoled ourselves that here at Whitecliffs, where there are two PESOs

as well as J. C. Aprahamian, a cousin of Ludwig Aprahamian, No. 2 under the Socialists at the Min of Supply, Funk would hardly take the liberties he had done at Monks Rd where he had Spoletti as obsequious audience.

Need I say we were mistaken.

However—Manders thinks that this time Funk has gone too far.

* * * * *

Until Funk arrived we had no trouble with the newly installed geysers. Manders is adamant on this score. True, a few complained the amount of hot water per bath unit (you click an indicator on the gas assembly) was insufficient to cover your knees—but Manders had quickly put in: "That all depends where you have your knees—high or flat."

Funk then—to the embarrassment of all present—sat on the floor and, turning up his trousers to the thigh, which was completely unnecessary for the illustration of his point, said: "Liebe Munters—*here* have I my knees—neider hunched, chin-unter—as in the voomb—nieder flat as in splintz, or in Vinchester Public School."

This was his first meal at Whitecliffs. There was considerable indignation. Aprahamian's cousin as well as Manders had been at Winchester, and it was impertinence on the part of Funk to suggest he knew what happened there.

Manders said coldly "Splints? — Winchester?—I don't really follow."

"Then shall I guide?" Funk said. "In Vinchester is man put in splintz."

Sexual, mental and general pedaclassical. Der Dionysan invisible seven-eighths is regulated by Runs and Chapel in which, when organ stops too sudden, comes cry "Three no trumps"—so nature comes out blitz like Mosley or splintz—like Cripps. In eider case ricochet."

This speech I'm bound to admit gained for Funck a certain attention—as gibberish will.

Manders said drily "Have you ever been to Winchester?"

Funck said "Ja—in charabance—with the Old Meistersingers to play flannelby."

Manders said "I'm afraid you're rather off net, old man. As off net as I'd be on beer garden duelling . . . or gas ovens."

* * * * *

Whenever Funck went into the bathroom Manders heard a shunting noise—quick roars of flame followed by shorter spurts of water. Steam seeped from under the door and when he came out you couldn't see down the passage.

Funck boasted openly that by turning the tap on and off quickly he had evolved a means of having a proper bath. Apparently the tap control diminished the flow of water quicker than it subdued the flames. Thus by quick switching he ensured a minimum of water was played on by a maximum of fire. Naturally the makers had never provided for this.

Greed had its consequences. Soon we were without any hot water at all.

Manders rang the MS and we got a 2b priority which Manders said was quite good considering. Work actually started the next day—the 23rd—but was suspended.

On Christmas Eve we sat down to a capital min. turkey imported from Ecuador to save a banana ship from coming back empty. Manders was explaining the point of re-exporting bananas when Funck came in.

He did have a heavy cold, but he certainly made the most of it. He allowed his teeth to chatter like loose tappets and kept staunching his nose with a large mauve handkerchief, sneezing without modifying noise or direction, and groaning. He interrupted general conversation to say that if he hadn't got into his asbestos basin while it was still on the stove he mightn't have been there at all.

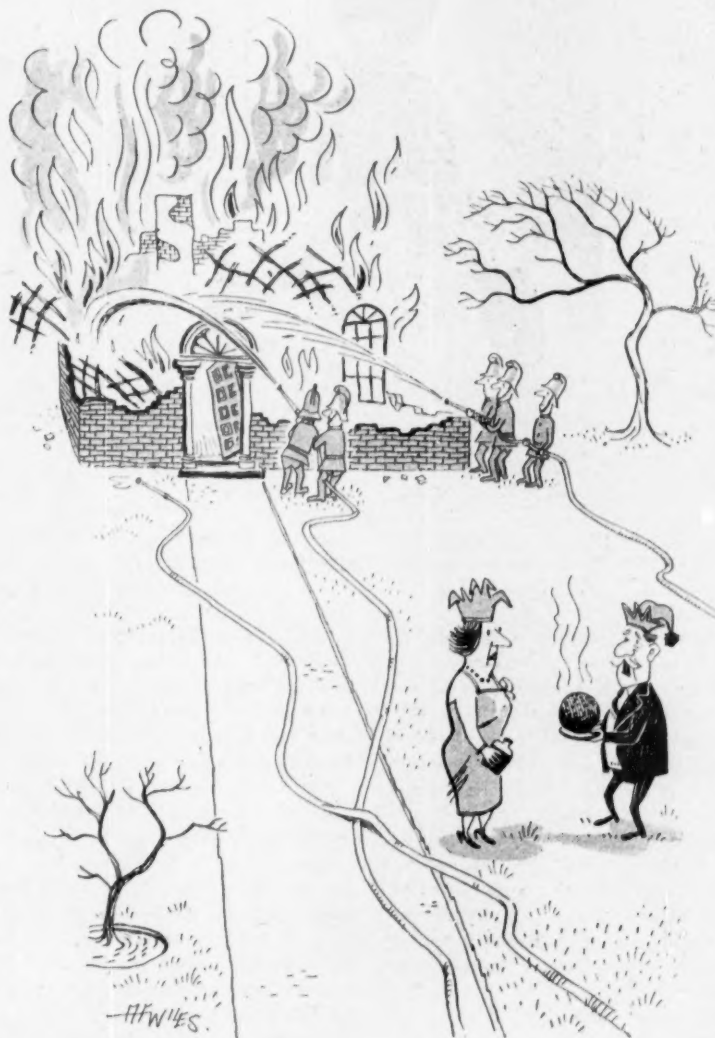
We all knew this was aimed at

Manders, who had defended the delay of Works in mending the geyser as not their fault but the result of the men's "freedom to contract," which presumably nobody questioned. Now Manders merely added "Rome wasn't built in a day."

Funck said "Nein—but when the man came to build Rome he didn't prepare the site, take down the previous huts and then suddenly say—Nein nein: I'm the man who builds Musselborough—I can't cottidue. You'll hab to get the mad that builds Robe."

The sudden blockage of Funck's nose caused a certain merriment at his expense. We invited him hilariously to go on—tell us more. Apparently quite unconscious of what we thought of him, he went on.

"Comth a how-d'ye-do in a pin-stripe—yes—so—tools, boy to hold them, mugs for tea, stop-watch for knock-off, ready-reckoner for time and seven-thirteenth. So. Hallo. Good morning he says—nice as anything. Trouble with the geyser? Dow look, I said, medjion no geyser to me: she covers



"I managed to put the pudding out."



Munters' knees, bud for me has not even covered my ankles.

"But by dows he has the drum off and the bipes like macaroni so hadda there never a geyser been. Then sudden. Eureka: I see, sir, it's the hot-water feed that has failed; I'm afraid I'm the cold-water man.

"Liebe Munters—I'b the code-wadder man, hm?

"Well—I get down on my knees to him. Please, please—if you are the code-wadder man then have you to the right place come. But no—he begins to pack.

"Endlich I catch the boy's coat as they go. Perhaps you—so yug and tedder—Look 'ere, he say—there's no call to cub ober all ysterical. But I say that's just what there is. And he say

Come again—so I rejoice: goud, good—but when? And he say nuts. A-shoo, ACGH*SHOO."

We all turned away from Funck, and some had occasion to mop themselves. Then he resumed.

"To-morrow comth tidings comfort—eh? i.e. the hod-wadder man. Aha—but he say it's the gas feed so must I the gas man get. In spring comth the gas man—che—aber zu spät—by then Johannes Funck sol in Odessa be with Burgher and Maclean, so?—selling Munters' rada secrets for a hot bath, all discreet, so, with my knees in splintz flat, behind an iron curtain."

This was in extremely bad taste. J. C. Aprahamian had at one time been an associate of Burgess and had several times since been screened.

Manders turned to him and made it all right by saying "Are you taking your leave after New Year, Ap?" This constituted a snub to Funck and a sympathetic courtesy to J. C. Aprahamian.

Christmas morn the whole mess was surprised when a bearded man turned up from Works with a considerable case full of tools. He was an odd-looking man and seemed unwilling to be drawn into conversation by Manders, who thanked him for answering our SOS.

He hammered and tinkered all day. In the afternoon Manders and I went to the rec. centre. When we came back the house was full of steam and the voice of Funck could be heard bellowing some German song. Manders said "Trust Funck to be first into the bath when it's mended. And I bet he never took the trouble to have a word with the man who gave up his Christmas to put it right."

When Funck vacated the ablutions we went in to have a look at the reparation.

To our satisfaction a very much heavier and hotter stream of water than previously fell into the receptacle. The gas assembly had been completely modified. We were discussing this when our eyes fell on three large words neatly painted beneath the manufacturer's plate and patent—"But Funck fixit."

We decided to speak to the MS—the day after Boxing Day.

At first Manders refused to have a bath, but finally he found he was able to adjust the geyser to the flow laid down in Hostel Orders.

It blew up.

He was extremely lucky to escape with shock.

In view of the festive season Manders at supper limited himself to one remark. He said to Funck: "It would have been all right—if you had mended it."

Funck said "Grosser VOOMPH, ja?—Supposing *purposed*—? heh heh heh. Supposing obscurely DESIRED—eh?"

HUGO CHARTERIS

5 5

"Fun with the Stars
LORD LUCK

Today for everybody: Your own judgment may be much better than that of other people during the initial stages of the day."

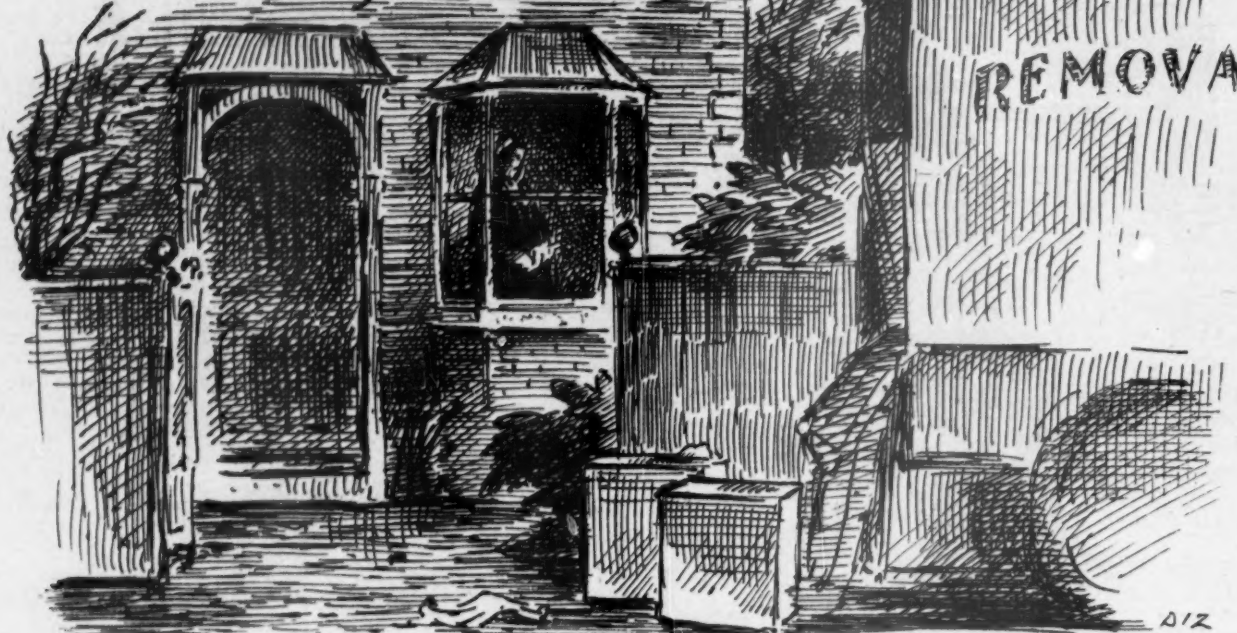
Daily Paper

That is, of course, if the other people are nobodies.



"Hop it! you can't sing Christmas carols here."

Something in the Oven



WE are moving, and the familiar rooms don't need us. Here, and in strange rooms ahead, echo is the sole tenant. We're quiet. Pat writes labels. I stare out at smoke rising.

My eye falls to the hole in the door pane. So, frowning, we had stood three years ago, when we arrived.

"Odd," she had said, "I'd swear that wasn't there when we looked round."

"It must have been that airgun of his," I remarked.

"It was," said the foreman. "We did his moving for him day before yesterday; I picked the thing up and it went off in my hands."

"Neat hole. Neat little man. The gun was for cats."

"Well, we ain't blooming cats... Do you know another thing? Those cupboards were stacked with sugar and chocolate boxes—unopened; rotten, some of 'em. What do I do with this lot, I asked. Pack everything, he says. One carton he gives to the old girl next door—for jam-making!"

"He's charging us for the steel doorsteps."

"Bet he is."

Mr. R—, a pale, prudish, dapper

man, loved birds (hence the cat gun), flowers and secrecy. Hedges and firs left few angles for staring into his windows. We had noticed the tidiness, the knockers on separate bedrooms. A very quiet couple.

"She's desperately unhappy," Pat insisted, as we walked to the bus stop. "People," I said, "get that look."

"I can't bear it."

However, we liked the place, and took it. A month later the alarm woke us to rolled carpets and bursting suit-cases, evacuees for the day.

And there, when we moved in, was the neat hole.

* * * * *

Strange morning sounds, a convent bell, trains—voices.

"Nobody knew he was going! One day here, and the next—Two pints?"

"Please" — (Pat's voice) — "Mrs. R— had gone on first, hadn't she?"

"Gone on is the word—to a better place, let's hope."

"What do you mean? She's not dead, is she?"

"That's about it."

"Good heavens, when—when did this happen?"

"Christmas Eve."

Pat's head looked in. "Did you hear

that? And three days afterwards we got that card with best wishes 'from all at No. 36'... I *knew* there was something."

We stared at one another.

* * * * *

Bread man followed paper man, and we weren't long without chimney sweep, occasional gardener, window cleaner: one steps right into the shoes of the previous occupant—about whom, by the way, they seemed to know exceedingly little. He was a one, she was a one; and one and one don't make a pair. That seemed to be all. Cats began to look over our fences, and soon stalked the lawn. Snowdrops appeared—as he'd said they would—and the starlings pecked at them.

* * * * *

I was working late one night when a cry from the bathroom, *George, a man's just gone down the passage!* made me start up. *Stop him! Call the police!* I headed for the back door, paused at the telephone, looked out, listened. It was snowing.

Meanwhile the stark tale continued: *I saw his face against the window! He turned and ran! Hurry! He's gone to the front!*

So out of the front door I lunged, into

the whirling damp, there to frisk shadows and shrubs. One gate was ajar. I scanned up and down. What a night! Then slithering back I looked in on my Pat, sitting up in the bath with a turban. "Call the police!" she exclaimed at once. "He had rubber shoes! He was light haired! I didn't hear a thing, suddenly it was there, the face—quite a round face—and when I shouted it turned and went." So, more alive to the situation, which even now sounded like the radio next door, I dialled 999.

Within five minutes the squad car had arrived, and while we were talking, three policemen and I, and Pat behind the bathroom door, there came a second car. "Friday night job," said one plainclothes man. "It'd be him all right." They explored, brutally, where I had finicked, and drove away, one to the right, the other to the left. Pat emerged, seized a mackintosh, a torch, a hammer, and insisted on beating the back garden while I waited in front with a stick.

No result. But when we were indoors, from the bedroom—that is, the farther side—she shouted "There he is again!" We rushed out back and front, but again there was nothing except snow and the chuckle in the drains. "I heard him!" called Pat, in a voice to harry the deaf: "run the sword through those firs and under the hedge!" I poked with my stick. She strode off down the road, meeting one of the squad cars. "God

almighty!" remarked the driver. "Look what she's got!" The hammer, presumably. "I'd use it too," said she.

The burglar's reappearance (if it could be called that) was discussed. They examined under the bathroom window. "Have you been along here?" the sergeant asked Pat, who shook her head. "Well, this is a woman's footprint." We bent down. It might have been.

The cars departed, to patrol or post the neighbourhood all night. In bed—torch and hammer forgotten—we drank tea.

"A woman?" I said.

"I shan't sleep," declared Pat, but did; and I woke early, still unbursed, but thinking in a desultory way of Mrs. R—.

There were people coming to lunch, and Pat worked in the kitchen porch, cracking crabs with the hammer.

Nothing was said about these excitements for almost a week, then Pat exclaimed: "I must get a knife and cut that cord away."

"What cord?"

"You know, that cord on the towel rail. It's nagged at me ever since we came here, and after the other night..."

I remembered. A house is all the emptier for what's left behind: in this case, two inches of candle and a wrinkled apple, and this trailing cord in the bathroom. Mr. R—'s signature.

"What could it be doing there?" asked Pat, after the cord had been disposed of with a bang of the dust-bin lid; "you don't think he can have...?"

I didn't think so; though it had occurred to me.

Note from Mr. R—! "Trust everything is in order; and to remind you of the £2, not yet reached me, for ladder and letter-box. If not required, my agents will call to take them away."

"Oh to hell with him," we said.

They turned up that afternoon, the agents—mother and son. "We called about the ladder and—"

"You can take it," I said, "if it will bear moving. The letter-box is a fixture."

"Oh, but Mr. R— distinctly said—"

"Don't I speak distinctly? The letter-box stays."

"He's not at all well."

"This will probably make him worse."

"Poor man, he—"

"Poor woman," came Pat's voice, like the splitting of ice, "what about HER?"

They took the ladder, and could be seen, ten minutes later, still trying to stuff it into their small car.

We learnt from a neighbour—the old lady favoured with sugar—that



Mrs. R— committed suicide, throwing herself under a train. She had the cutting somewhere, and would look it out.

Pat said she had known "something of the sort" all along.

* * * * *

The idea of Mrs. R— more and more haunted us, and not only the idea.

Pat has had experiences of the kind. Once at Bodiam Castle, climbing the hollow old stairs, she felt such a reluctance that she had to turn back; and all the way down kept saying to her companion "Don't push me," while he as fiercely protested "I'm not pushing." At home and in bed it was found that her back was covered with large blisters, which disappeared after three hours' sleep. Someone, it transpired later, had fallen or been pushed off the staircase, with the result that the Castle had been closed for some years.

But should you distrust these credentials, my own may be preferable: I had never, to the best of my knowledge, either seen or heard a ghost.

* * * * *

I didn't as a matter of fact meet this one.

I smelt burning.

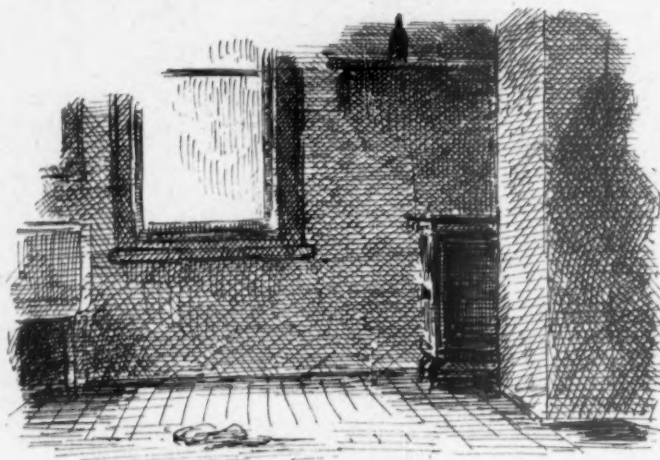
"What's that burning?" I asked. "Nothing," said Pat. And there was, when we came to look, nothing. But there had been the smell of burning.

Over weeks and months this was repeated so often—causing some momentary heart-burnings—that I came to expect it and even to distinguish the intensity and nature of what I smelt. It nearly always came from the kitchen. The impression never lasted long, and by the time we had flung open windows and doors it would be scarcely perceptible.

One morning the old lady from next door came bringing lettuces and the newspaper cutting, which in half a dozen lines stated that Mrs. R—, of our present address, had jumped in front of a Tube train at Old Street station: verdict, suicide while of

unsound mind. While we were studying the crude newsprint, and turning it over as though for further enlightenment, I noticed the burning. "There it is again," I said to Pat. The old lady, very spry, had lifted her nose. So I explained.

"That's funny," she said, "one day there was just such a smell: I wasn't cooking myself and couldn't make it out. Then I thought of Mrs. R—. She was always a thoughtless woman."



("Not my impression," interrupted Pat.) "Well, she'd wander off down the garden, leaving milk to boil over, and so on. But this particular day they were both out. I saw smoke coming out from the kitchen window, and went round to look. Just as I was wondering what to do, there was Mr. R— with his hat on. 'What are you doing here?' he asked. I pointed to the smoke. He ran round to the front. She stood watching, with quite a look of horror on her face. And no wonder! For it had been pigs' trotters; they had boiled to glue, and it was the glue burning . . ."

She gave a sniff as she walked out, but by then whatever had started us off had vanished.

* * * * *

One other thing she told us: Mrs. R— liked cats, and used to own one, but that was long, long ago.

* * * * *

My study had been Mrs. R—'s bedroom. Sounds of pins dropping: occasionally a woman's voice over a plane passing low or the radio: half-burnt shoes, knitting patterns, bottles of aspirin in the shed; a rustle as of

someone coming into the room. And all amounting to so little: that's the strange thing. For during the time we have been here Mrs. R—, whom living I saw once only, and probably could not have recognized, has grown almost as familiar as people I see every day. It's as though all this time in a tray a photograph had been slowly developing.

There are the externals: a dumpy figure, clenched hands, a blonde astonished look, as though a handful of powder had been flung in her face, and one eye slightly awry in a lost-sheep way. Of her character or secrets I understand no more than when I started. She was unhappy, of course, but what more? I don't know. And oddly enough I don't seem to care. She doesn't bother me, and I hope—as a usurper putting her corners to different uses—I don't bother her. Her tragedy seems very far away.

For a time, to give more interest to the situation, I entertained the notion that it was she who had instigated misery, that she had been jealous, unfaithful, malignant, and her last act a desperate act of revenge. So, in a novel managing the swing of sympathies, it might turn out. But the suggestion never quite worked. After my flurry of impatience, as in a pool that resumes its reflection, would return that image, definite if inscrutable, of a tired, worried, lost soul . . .

* * * * *

She is brought nearer, for a moment, by the empty rooms, the echoes reaching back. And we have just found between two floorboards a small gilt button that had escaped notice all these years.

We take our final look round. Nothing left? All ready? Note for the milkman? Trains in the valley? The convent bell? The hole in the door pane?

And Mrs. R—? I hardly think she'll follow where we are going, and those moving in won't notice.

But my eye lingers on the gas-stove.

G. W. STONIER

Very Merry

By DAVID YATES MASON

"IF it's got to come out it's got to come out," the Uncle said, "and the sooner the better. You can't have the wretched thing grumbling away inside you all over Christmas."

"But suppose I don't get out of the hospital before then?" the Nephew replied. "Some people take ages to get over operations."

"In that case," said the Uncle decidedly, "you can count on having quite the jolliest time you've ever had."

"I don't suppose I shall be feeling very jolly."

"Jolly? In hospital at Christmas? Of course you'll be feeling jolly. If you aren't, well, you just won't be there at all. They'll bundle you back home, if it's humanly or humanely possible, not a second later than Christmas Eve. And quite right too. They don't want a lot of tiresome invalids moaning and complaining and spoiling the fun."

"I still think I'd rather be at home," said the Nephew.

"I really can't understand you," the Uncle sighed. "You know perfectly well what it will be like at home. Exchange of embarrassing presents in the morning. Forcible over-feeding and drinking at midday followed by obligatory assistance with the washing up and attention to the radio just when you're wanting to go to sleep. Tea and rich cake. More drink and a supper of chilly turkey, with your parents and aunts, having exhausted every other subject, exhuming reminiscences of dead relations."

"I can't imagine it will be any worse than being in hospital," said the Nephew.

"Don't you believe it," the Uncle replied. "I vividly remember how two days before one twenty-fifth I found myself, drugged and practically naked, being wheeled into the operating theatre and thinking rather as you do now. But how wrong I was. The moment I regained consciousness the excitement in the air began to take hold of me and by the time the Great Day arrived I was sitting up in bed and ready for anything."

"I can't see myself doing that," said the Nephew.

"You don't know," said the Uncle. "You simply don't know. Hospitals nowadays occupy the privileged place

in the public regard—and in their own—that in the Middle Ages was held by the great religious houses—I suppose it's some sort of atavistic survival—and just as the Mediaeval Church had its annual let-up at Christmas, so do they. It's a great antiseptic saturnalia in which even the most faded gaieties take on a piquancy totally lacking elsewhere. Evergreens and ether. Tinsel among the splints. Cotton-wool snow plucked from sterile swabs.

"The Happy Morn begins early, soon after five a.m., but probably you won't have slept much what with 'Silent Night' booming through the wards and the excited rustlings of the Night Sisters. Then before you know where you are you'll find yourself being washed, breakfasted and having your more intimate needs attended to while a choir of high-spirited nurses from

County Kerry get going on 'Hark the Herald.' That's only the beginning. Then come the visits. In fact you'll find you'll spend most of the day being visited and stared at until in the end you'll come to feel like some scheduled monument or an exhibit in a festively decorated museum. There will be parties of them—Matrons, Assistant Matrons, Sisters, Consultants, House Surgeons, Ministers of Religion, the Hospital Committee, all remote and unreal, like figures seen through plate glass. There may even, if you're lucky, be some bespectacled high-up from the Regional Board or the Ministry itself."

"It sounds ghastly," said the Nephew.

"You needn't worry," the Uncle reassured him. "You only have to smile and murmur 'Merry Christmas' and they go away. Besides, you mustn't forget the pleasure you're giving. One





thelwell.

"You rang?"

of the sweetest of the sweets of office to-day is the exercise of a royal graciousness and kindly concern for those who, thanks to State subsidy, have not the remotest personal claim on your generosity."

"I call it insulting," said the Nephew.

"One must never lose an opportunity," the Uncle replied, a shade pompously, "of affording others, particularly one's superiors and at this season of the year, any legitimate enjoyment. Anyway, it's seen that they are all well out of the way before the big moment of the day arrives. Excitement, somehow suppressed until then, reaches fever pitch as huge birds are borne steaming in. The laughter and gaiety know no bounds as the white-coated Chief Surgeon proceeds to

dissect them with a wealth of Harley Street wit ('Hold the patient down, Sister. I'm about to make an incision.') Everyone will be happy and pulling crackers. Then there will be vast, plummy puddings and hard mince pies."

"I probably won't be able to eat a thing," said the Nephew.

"Neither will most of the patients, but that doesn't really matter. It's the ceremony and sense of occasion that count. I'll probably be calling on you in the afternoon. One's own family are allowed in then and it's better to have someone there, otherwise other patients' relations, in an excess of seasonable good will, will think you look lonely and unloved and try to do something about it. When they are all gone it's cold fowl, more carols and an early night."

"I should think so," said the Nephew.

"Of course there are a lot of other diversions I haven't even mentioned," the Uncle went on. "Devotional interludes, Christmas trees, paper caps, dramatic performances by local amateurs for which you'll be dressing-gowned and wheeled into the Lecture Theatre—even, perhaps, if it's a Teaching Hospital, suggestive songs from medical students. There's not an unfilled moment of the whole happy day. It's jolly good cheer, good will and jolly good fun from beginning to end. One way and another," he went on reassuringly, "I know this year I can wholeheartedly wish you, and indeed promise you, a really Merry Christmas. And anyway you must always, always remember how much the staff enjoy it."

Jack and Jill Pot

By LORD KINROSS

THE modern age is one rich in mythology. Moreover, in this as in other respects superior to previous ages, its myths have flesh and blood. Its supernatural heroes and heroines exist, performing natural functions. They play games, eat dinners, appear on TV, make money. In such guises they complete the trinity to which every modern man, woman and child owes allegiance: his Family, his God, his Star. The modern child's Pantheon consists of Mum, Dad, Father Christmas, the Angels—and Miss Enid Blyton.

This Star is a good lady with bright eyes, a warm smile, dark clothes, discreet pearls, a black spaniel (called Laddie) at her feet, a black kitten (called Sooty) in her arms. She has two pretty daughters (called Gillian and Imogen) and a devoted, successful husband. They live in a cosy, half-timbered house, with a crazily-paved veranda, well-kept lawns and well-pruned rose-beds, on the outskirts of Metroland.

Miss Blyton is Britain's best-selling writer—though she modestly places herself second, in this respect, to Sir Winston Churchill ("His name is England"). She writes a dozen books a year, a magazine a fortnight, a single book in a week, ten thousand words in a day, all published by sixty-five publishers, at home and abroad, for uncounted millions of young devotees, of different races, colours and creeds. To the income-tax collector she is not Miss Enid Blyton at all but several solid, profit-earning companies.

Miss Blyton, with a humility appropriate in deities, rather wonders how all this has occurred. She writes as moved by the spirit, without conscious thought. From the depths of her subconscious (part Celtic, part English, part French), stories, persons, voices, situations, pictures, verses come welling up into her head and spilling down on to the keys of the typewriter, seldom to be altered. Thus inspired, she creates myths which are the reverse of horror comics. Their setting is a dream world, innocent of evil spirits, fiends or corpses. Arson may occur here, smuggling is rife and theft is frequent enough, but there is no blackmail, no torture, no murder, no rape.

The knight errant of this Utopia is

Noddy, "the little wooden man whose head is always mid-nid-nodding." Noddy, driving about Toyland, doing odd jobs, in "a dear little car of his very own," is the child who is father to the Little Man. Unsure of himself, for ever running out of petrol and otherwise doing the wrong thing, he is easily exploited by cats and teddy bears, notably Tricky Teddy, the sneak-thief, "polishing his horrid little pop-gun" like any teddy boy. But Big Ears, who is twenty years older even than Sir Winston Churchill, and thus filled with the wisdom of the gods, protects him. Unsophisticated, untough, unflirtatious, talking decent English, Noddy is nevertheless ousting the creations of Mr. Walt Disney from the top of the infantile market.

To children of teen and other ages Enid Blyton reveals myths of adventure, equally unhorrid (The Island, Castle, Valley, Mountain, Sea of Adventure); of mystery (of the Burnt Cottage, the Disappearing Cat, the Spiteful Letters, the Secret Room); of school (Fifth Formers at St. Clare's, the Naughtiest Girl in the School, the Naughtiest Girl is a Monitor); to say nothing of the facts of nature. Favourites with the middle-agers are the Famous Five. Julian, the steady boy, Dick, the rash one, Anne, the kind girl, George, the tomboy and Timmy the dog Go off in a Caravan, Go to Smuggler's Top, Get into Trouble, Have a wonderful Time, personifying as they do so the best British virtues, yet achieving popularity with the Germans, the Indonesians, the Tamils, the Fijians and the Americans.

Enid Blyton caters for every cult but that of the horse, leaving that tactfully to others in the

Pantheon. She also keeps, as a rule, out of Space, taking the down-to-earth view that her disciples prefer reading about what might conceivably happen to them. Hard-headed realists, they demand no nonsense, practical plots, action as swift as on the screen, characters well defined as Mr. Gilbert Harding, natural dialogue, few descriptive passages—and, unlike their grandparents, no homilies.

Above all they demand Enid Blyton herself, preferably in the flesh. Writing a million words a year is but an incidental part of Miss Blyton's ministrations. It is not enough to read about Noddy. He must materialize, in the form of fetishes and images: be worn as slippers, be washed with as soap, be played with as cards, be written on as notepaper, tell the time as a clock, be taken to bed as a cuddly doll. Hence the Noddy Licensing Company Inc., and various factories devoted to the business of his materialization.

It is not enough to read about the Famous Five. They must become a living myth: real Julians and Dicks and Annes and Georges, with real dogs or





cats, banding together in search of real adventure. Hence the F. F. Club, with its distinctive badge and its fifty thousand members. Enid Blyton is thus not merely Enid Blyton and Enid Blyton Ltd. but a way of life. "When you pin your badge on your coat," she writes to her Dear Boys and Girls, "remember that it is a sign that you are a friend of mine, and therefore trustable and kind."

She is also a welfare state on her own. Emulating Mr. Pink-Whistle, "a little man half-human and half-brownie, who goes about the world putting wrong things right," members of the Enid Blyton clubs, including also the Busy

Bees and the Sunbeams, or Kindheart Club, contribute handsome donations to the welfare of invalid children and beasts. These are amassed by walking home from school and saving bus money, offering to wash up at a penny a time, lending other children books for a similar fee, and other such devices. There is also a Magazine Club, which presents a Cake of the Month to a chosen birthday child.

To the more fortunate of her millions of devotees Enid Blyton has materialized in person. They may sit at her feet during Book Weeks or Autographing Afternoons. If they are wearing one of the mystic badges she may speak to

them in the street, to their incredulous, tongue-tied wonder; or if they see a woman in the street wearing the F.F. badge they know, in a flash of blinding revelation, that it is none other than she, the only adult in the world entitled to wear it. After following her in awe for several blocks they may find the voice to murmur "Enid Blyton," and address her a word of homage.

The less fortunate may at least offer up a prayer to her and be sure that it will be answered—on a postcard. Enid Blyton gets three thousand letters from children a week, answering many in her own magic hand. When a dog, disloyally, bit her and she went to hospital she got

a thousand a day. A few achieve the immortality of publication, with name in black letters, in the Enid Blyton Magazine: thus Annette Starbuck, of Nottingham, who writes "Dear Enid Blyton, Please will you write a story in our magazine to tell children NOT to stand or walk right on the edge of the pavement, because I did, and I fell on to a passing car, cut my forehead, and had eighteen stitches in, and had to stay in hospital for eight days." She gets the reply, "Your letter will be better than a story, Annette—what a dreadful thing to happen! I'm glad you are better." Sometimes mothers write for their children: Mrs. Wood, of Sheffield 10, for instance, who sends a teddy bear for a sick child and adds "He has been to the cleaners so he is quite all right."

To those who merely worship from afar, every detail of the life of Enid Blyton is familiar. They know that she called her house Green Hedges on the suggestion of the disciples. They know that in her garden she has a marble statue of a child reading a book, presumably by Enid Blyton; and they quote her saying, to the birds eating her cherries, "Sing to me in the spring and you can take my cherries in the summer." They know that "Gillian can knit well, but not Imogen."

They know that a lot of her creatures are real, hence infinitely superior to mere fairy-tale people: her policeman, for instance, "broad and burly and kind and shrewd and trustable," who was "rather tickled" at being put in the books, and at being promoted in rank with each mystery story; Laddie the spaniel, called Loony because he is "so beautiful, so mad and sometimes so extraordinarily silly"; Bill Smugs, in the adventure stories, a baldish gentleman whom Enid Blyton met at Swanage, who asked to be put in, and is in, but doesn't know it as he doesn't read Enid Blyton.

And now all the creatures in this modern mythology are materializing on a stage, in the guise of actors. A Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and a prosperous Enid Blyton to all our juvenile readers.

"The emergency housing units have been set up and now refugees are being looked after by a well-oiled machine," he said.

The Toronto Telegram

Who's looking after the machine?

O Tempora!

READING between the headlines in the Press,
Especially *The Times*, one can discern
A trend, a movement, an impendingness:
The pun's return.

Can we foresee in each poor twisted word
(HULL AND HIGH WATER when that port was flooded)
The full bloom of a plant we'd have preferred
Not to have budded?

Take heart, I shall not bother to expand
Into imaginary headlines for
The future's peace talks, pacts, peace treaties and
The next World War;

I'd like to know, though, at what sort of folk
These things are aimed: great-uncles who have known
Their own grandfathers make that sort of joke
Without a groan?

Or at the coming men who've not come far
From school-slang, nicknames, lavatory rhymes?
For sad to say it may be we who are
Behind the times.

PETER DICKINSON



Incomplete Item

By H. F. ELLIS

LOGGERHEAD turtles from the tropics may soon arrive on British shores, predicts Sussex naturalist Mr. E. M. Venables, who advises that a close look-out be kept for them on the south and south-west coasts. As a turtle-predictor Mr. Venables stands alone, for it was he who in December of last year forecast the arrival of these curious creatures a clear week before the first was seen. Nor are his methods arcane or beyond the grasp of the untutored layman. 'The goose barnacle is the clue. "Once again," says Mr. Venables, "goose barnacles have come ashore, carried by the recent storms"; and where the goose barnacle goes, there also, it appears, goes the loggerhead turtle.

What strikes me as odd about this news item, which I have paraphrased pretty well in its entirety from the *Evening News*, is that there is no more of it. Countless questions throng the mind, which the Editor, you might have thought, would be only too glad to answer. And so he would be, no doubt, were it not for this monstrously prolonged shortage of newsprint. His natural instinct to give his readers the frills, the comments, the little bit extra about turtles that they have a right to expect, must be ruthlessly restrained; he has room for the bare facts only; he has to hurry on, willy-nilly, to tell them about Mrs. Councillor S. Gadsby, who

has rightly been complaining to Swanmore (Hants.) Parish Council of shocks sustained from electric cattle-fences.

It gives me pleasure, at this season of good will, to spare an inch or two of space for the illuminating comments that would certainly, in less restricted papers, have graced the foot of an item so rich in reader-interest as this titbit from the *Evening News*.

Our Nature Correspondent writes:

The loggerhead is a member of the Cheloniidae, a family of strong marine turtles, with flipper-like feet and broad, partially ossified carapaces. Though not so large as the Green Turtle of southern Brazil, nor so fierce as the Hawksbill—neither of which is in any case likely to be encountered in British waters—it is none the less an impressive reptile, which should add interest and variety to a Yuletide stroll along our southerly beaches. The head and neck are, of course, retractile.

The familiar goose barnacle must not be confused with the Barnacle Goose, a handsome black-and-white graminivorous bird, for which a close look-out should now be kept by visitors to the Outer Hebrides.

Or, in case that doesn't interest you, *Our Medical Correspondent writes:*

Cases of turtle-bite are fortunately rare in these islands, but it is as well, while deprecating anything in the nature

of a widespread panic, to take sensible precautions when walking by the margin of the waves at this time of the year. Good, stout boots should always be worn, and care should be taken to keep young children well away from any large, unfamiliar object, particularly if it appears to be testudinate in form. In no circumstances should attempts be made to turn stranded turtles over on their backs, or vice versa, such work being best left to experts. If bitten, apply a ten per cent solution of hydrated antipyrhistamine *immediately* and seek medical aid.

A trifle sneeringly, *Our Meteorological Correspondent writes:*

Gales strong enough to drive loggerhead turtles ashore are by no means unusual at this season. Tarpon and even tunnyfish turning the scales at upwards of one thousand pounds have been known to be displaced hundreds of miles from their feeding grounds by winds of less than Force Six. If the low pressure trough now centred over the Azores continues to move north-eastward at its present rate I should expect reports of killer-whales off the Lizard by Christmas, followed by thundery showers and perhaps some cuttle-fish at west coast resorts. Invasions of goose barnacles are not, by themselves, of any meteorological significance.

Readers, however, still wait with impatience to hear what *Our Cookery Expert writes:*

Loggerhead flan, though little known in this country, is rated a delicacy by the natives of the Galapagos Islands. Hostesses, weary of the eternal turkey and mince pie, will welcome this chance to give their guests a change. Turn the turtle inside out and boil for an hour and a half in a purée of cream and white wine which should previously have been beaten to a froth. Serve on *croûtons* when tacky, or arrange in dainty two-inch lumps round the sides of a soufflée dish. Enough, or sufficient rather, for from eighty to a hundred and fifty persons, according to size and appetite.

Our Parliamentary Correspondent, alas, has not written.



Get Out the Game-Carvers

"Young Budgerigars 20/- pair: will keep for Christmas."—*The Jersey Evening Post*



Non-Party Party

IN the season of peace and goodwill to men, they should start the Christmas recess

With a real non-Party party that would ease political stress,
Where the SPEAKER would doff his long grey wig and elegant velvet drawers
For the equally long grey whiskers and red robe of Santa Claus.

Over subsidized refreshments, as appetizing as pretty
(Devised by WILLIAM STEWARD and the rest of the Kitchen Committee),
The two Front Benches would fraternize, with a truce to Party strife,
Discussing together the high rewards that accrue from political life.

For this man a crown of glory, for this the hair-shirt of a martyr,
For this one a trip to China, for this the robes of the Garter—
And as their chiefs swap joys and griefs over past ire's tepid embers,
What can we see on the Christmas tree for the poor old Private Members?

FENNER BROCKWAY has got a golliwog. It's a peaches-and-cream complexion,
So that those who balk at the colour-bar will have no ground for objection;
To cheer up CLEMENT DAVIES, there's a Liberal Member or so,
And for NORMAN DODDS a subscription to a good press-cutting bureau;

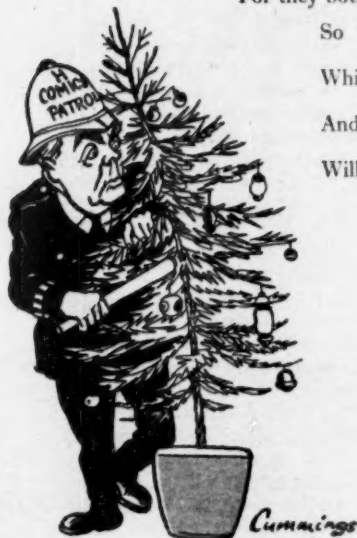
Sir THOMAS MOORE has a puppy dog to add to his animal pets,
And see how thickly the tree is hung with nice new TV sets!—
For LAURENCE ORR and CHRIS MAYHEW, LESLIE PLUMMER and CHARLES
ORR-EWING,

So each can see what the others (and ROBERT BOOTHBY) are doing.

There's a whip apiece for VICTOR YATES and EMRYS HUGHES and SYDNEY
And earnest ERNEST FERNYHOUGH and the others of their kidney;
But JOHN FREEMAN and RICHARD CROSSMAN their present will have to share,
For they both can't play with the one *New Statesman* editorial chair.

So the season of peace and goodwill to men brings a
temporary quiescence
While the Members play in a harmless way with their lovely
Christmas presents;
And those who seem, at a casual glance, to have heartlessly
been missed
Will be sure to show, in a week or so, in the New Year's
Honours List.

B. A. YOUNG





BOOKING OFFICE

Lady in the Light

Always in Vogue. Edna Woolman Chase and Ilka Chase. *Gollancz, 21/-*

FASHION deserves encouragement because it is encouraging. It is worldly and urges us to make the best of the world in which we live: even the most optimistic do not expect the next world to be fun. Fashion is voluntary. Rich or poor women who dress badly are not tragic but pitiable and ludicrous. There is something to be said for removing the grosser challenges from Man who then, unnumbed by ice or sun, starvation or slavery, can be spurred into effort and ingenuity by the pursuit of comfort and luxury.

Fashion uses the drives of vanity to train us to appreciate quality, to discriminate, to learn that in assessing value rarity is not enough. It serves the ideal that every street scene should be as enjoyable as a theatre, every craft an art, every man and woman as conscious of nobility and potentiality as the most innately elegant of primitive peoples. It helps to satisfy the healthy liking for plumage that distinguishes the life-enhancing from the life-diminishing. Hitler's raincoat was more representative of the dark horrors of his régime than all the uniforms of Nuremberg. Hitler was slug, not firefly, and Himmler, who dressed like a sidesman, was a death-watch beetle, dry, rigid and drab. Life is bright and flexible and a balance between liquid and solid. It changes and develops, tries this gay route and that, is controlled and outrageous.

Though there is a danger that Fashion may export poisons to Art across their common frontier—*chi-chi*, jam for money, a sidling mien in the presence of expense accountants—they have generally nourished each other: compare painting in France and England during the last century. The Nonconformist Conscience, clad in the dark, satanic products of England's mills, nearly deflected our national genius and severed our culture from its roots. It is still possible to stand outside a Chapel

on a Sunday and see the thick-lipped smirk below the black velour, the heavy expensive cloth imprisoning the breathing body, the deliberate separation of design and wearer. This, as much as the shoddy ugliness of the building, its furniture and often its music, remind us that England's hold on quality is still precarious. Catholic bad taste, as gloatingly described by Mr. Graham

fiction, has been the preceptress of the whole Fashion world. She does not discuss the place her special interest should take in a philosophically balanced life: she rightly assumes that a balanced life will be enriched by it. As in Mistinguett's recent book, the emphasis all through is on hard work, will-power and professionalism. (America and France both excel in clear-eyed autobiography.)

The World of Fashion, being an expanding world and relying on a stream of new ideas, still provides an opening for ability to express itself. The relationship between capital and expertise is close. One never gets the feeling that Mrs. Chase has had to persuade accountants to persuade lawyers to persuade stockholders to agree to the proper course. Her story should appeal to many readers who are not particularly interested in clothes or the *Life Gracious*. The economic historian will notice curious parallels with the partnerships of inventor and distributor in the early Industrial Revolution. The psychologist will find the brilliant pictures of temperaments in action moderate his disbelief in the primacy of will. The general reader, whose dress may be as drab as mine, will appreciate words used with the clarity of dress patterns and enjoy a few hours in sunlight as brilliant as limelight. The moralist will have the valuable experience of being baffled.

The least approving reader will probably be the Art critic. Mrs. Chase is always emphasizing the difference between Fashion and Style, and the critic may object that the Style taught by *Vogue* is silly, smart-art, *chic*, contaminated by money. Well, *Vogue* ought sometimes to be silly. Silliness in some odd way is often productive. There has been plenty of it in the ballet, in the theatre and in the applied arts. Shelley had a streak and so had Yeats. As for the other objections, has Society ever spoiled anything not already impure? In some periods it has benefited painters to live close to Society and undertake commissions. One would imagine this is such a period, at least in



Greene, that *Malleus Beneficarum*, can be execrable but it generally has some kinship with high spirits, with a child's pleasure in bright colours and gay shapes.

For some people to be passionately devoted to matters of secondary importance raises the targets of the race. *Vogue's* famous editor, Mrs. Chase, paints herself as a narrow enthusiast, doing what she is born to do with ruthless relish. Her daughter has collaborated in the book and perhaps has lightened the maternal sense of mission. The result is as entertaining as exciting. For sixty years Mrs. Chase, one of the most formidable matrons in

America. Anyway, better be a good entertainer than a second-rate eremite. *Vogue* may be likely to find more in common with Dufy than with David Jones, but that is better than finding something in common with the painters of carousing prelates and partially-towelled nudes. R. G. G. PRICE

France. P. E. Charvet. *Benn*, 21/-

Here is a study of realism and idealism in conflict, both of them fundamental and persistent from generation to generation, idealism that detests compromise, splits up politics into twenty-three parties and leads the world in art and literature, realism that hoards gold and watches the eastern frontier. Mr. Charvet has developed his theme statistically in terms of economics, State constitutions and judicial systems, but all the time it is the French mentality itself that fascinates him and he might have dealt no less effectively with public education, say, or military history.

Typically he discovers conflict in France's administrative centralization, logical and therefore to be accepted, constrictive and therefore detestable, and in her criminal procedure aimed only to get at the facts without respect of individual feelings, offering in cheerful contrast our own woolly-minded if reasonably effective empirical methods. His final estimate is as equally divided between hope and anxiety as the National Assembly itself on any leading question of the day. C. C. P.

The Desperate Hours. Joseph Hayes. *Deutsch*, 10/6

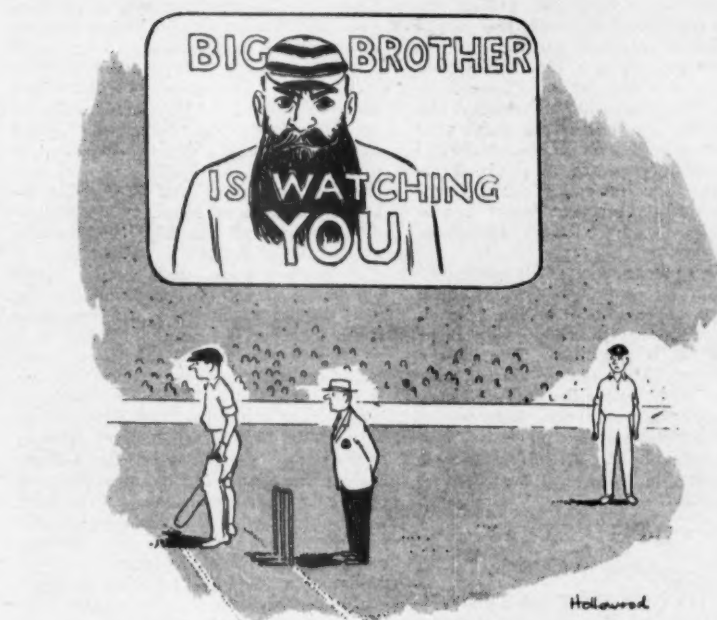
What would you do if three escaped convicts suddenly appeared in your nice suburban house, demanding concealment at the point of a gun? The answer, apparently, is: nothing.

This is the predicament in which Mr. Hayes has placed a typical American family. The agony is piled on as they are compelled to live out their normal lives under orders from the gunmen, but, unfortunately, the family is so typical that they have about as much reality as their prototypes, the ideal family of American advertising. Even though their ribs are sore from the revolver barrels that have been poked into them, it is difficult to care for their sufferings. The criminals too—the graceful, feline, leader, the Kid Brother, and the Ape-man—are traditional figures from another kind of fiction.

The plot, however, is worked out with considerable ingenuity and, although a touch of levity would make it spin along faster, the reader will feel genuinely curious to know the author's solution. J. M.

Sir Hans Sloane: The Great Collector and his Circle. E. St. John Brooks. *Batchworth Press*, 18/-

In a book about the founding father of the British Museum some tincture



of pedantry is not inappropriate. Dr. Brooks, however, has been almost too conscientious in the pursuit of precision. Or at any rate too repetitive. He seems to assume, like the Bellman, that what he tells us three times we shall accept for truth; while to follow him through the mazes of a complex but unexciting genealogy is an exercise ultimately fatiguing. Nevertheless there is much to enjoy in his well-documented story of a long, industrious and beneficent life. Being himself a botanist he writes with authority on those researches, in Jamaica and elsewhere, which won commendation from the great John Ray.

He establishes that Sloane, if a fashionable physician, was far from being an incompetent one; though he appears to have missed Lord Egmont's evidence that his resignation of the presidency of the College of Physicians in 1735 was due to a probably sound apprehension that he would not be re-elected. His chapter on the famous collections is, very properly, the most interesting of all. F. B.

Magical Mission. George Sandwith. *Omega Press*, 16/-

Other people's ghosts are often more exciting than other people's lives, as is proven by Mr. Sandwith with the space he allots to the fantastical in his autobiographical *Magical Mission*. Mr. Sandwith is not so much a collector of the bizarre as an incubator, being as it were equipped to develop a brood of weird and wondrous creatures whose hatchings are spontaneous expressions of Mr. Sandwith's deliberate excursions into the no-man's-land between life and death. When a child the author discovered his was an attracting personality.

He was therefore temperamentally able to accept in later life the visitations of unclassifiable phenomena. Soldiering in Ethiopia brought the gift of an icon, the protective properties of which were both comforting and startling. It accompanied him to Somaliland, Madagascar, Tonga and Fiji, told Mr. Sandwith that he had "travelled long enough through life alone," and lead him to his wife. *Magical Mission* can be wholly recommended to all with a taste for the horrific oddity and to those who like to read some not entirely credible matter in bed. K. D.

The Captain's Table. Richard Gordon. *Michael Joseph*, 10s. 6d.

The impression is that the author started with a handful of amusing situations in mind, based on the main theme of a cargo-boat captain suddenly promoted to the bridge of a passenger ship; but that these, however thinly spread, needed eking out with less comical, because more painfully contrived, material. The result is patchy. However, a trick of breezily comical expression, and an eye for situational fun on a small scale, are pretty certain to land the book on the cinema screen eventually, where it will provoke a good deal of easy laughter without overcoming incredulity. One difficulty may be the casting of Captain Ebbs himself, an unclear character who fluctuates between ungainly simplicity and ruthless opportunism. J. B. B.

Orchids and Salami. Eva Gabor. *W. H. Allen*, 10/6

This cheerful work makes one despair of serious, or sweat-born, literature.

Any reviewer in time gets to fear the earnest, carefully built book that is full of admirable qualities, far too good to slang, but just lacking in life. Miss Gabor has slung together some determinedly gay reminiscences of life in Budapest and Hollywood, some wisecracks about men and women and cooking and mink and some sensible comments on the relationship of glamour and acting. The result may not be literature but might live as obstinately as Colley Cibber's *Apology* or *The Specialist*.

It is journalism successfully made into a book and, like some other recent books that have come out of a non-literary milieu, it hits its little nails on the head with a sharp, bright crack. As a writer I should put Miss Gabor above Miss Gingold, with whose burlesque exaggerations her reminiscences have something in common, and below Miss Tallulah Bankhead, Arthur Binstead and Benvenuto Cellini. R. G. G. P.



AT THE PLAY

Spider's Web (SAVOY)

AGATHA CHRISTIE has pulled off a treble chance coup rare in the theatre, by having three new plays running at the same time in the West

End. *The Mousetrap* is now in its third year, and *Witness for the Prosecution* most deservedly in its second; but I am afraid her latest, *Spider's Web*, is unlikely to stay so long. As a comedy thriller it fails on both counts; the thrills are weakened by the comedy, and vice versa. Edgar Wallace could combine the two, and so on her day can Mrs. CHRISTIE, but here she has attempted the impossible by striking a note of flippancy with characters who would clearly have thought murder to be serious.

A drug-peddler, undoubtedly much better out of the way, is bashed on the head by an anonymous arm emerging suddenly from a secret cupboard in a country house; and to shield her small step-daughter, whom she wrongly believes is the culprit, the hostess persuades a house-party of unusual probity to fall in with a crack-brained scheme for disposing of the body. She is noted for tall stories, and a great deal of the action is taken up by her successive endeavours to pull the wool over the eyes of an improbably patient police inspector. Her embarrassed guests (who include a retired diplomat and a local J.P.) are dragged into these deceptions, and in the long scenes of examination the early tension disappears almost completely. The chief trouble is that the lady herself accepts a

corpse in her drawing-room so lightly that we are led to expect pure comedy, and the comedy is very thin.

Although in the end, of course, Mrs. CHRISTIE has had us guessing, in this play our prime purveyor of red herrings has left her expert surprises so late that we have already lost interest. Neither the cross-word puzzle fan nor the man who goes to laugh is likely to be satisfied.

No great acting is called for. MARGARET LOCKWOOD is pleasantly evasive, but cannot relieve the tedium of a silly woman. FELIX AYLMER has the thorny task of making a distinguished old gentleman keep his dignity in the face of a ridiculous situation, and almost succeeds. HAROLD SCOTT, as an eccentric bumbler, and MYLES EASON, as a slick young secretary, are on simpler wickets; JUDITH FURSE works hard as a facetious lady gardener, and MARGARET BARTON, specialist in neurotic children, lets off some sizable Freudian fireworks. As for CAMPBELL SINGER, he is doubtless carrying out his author's intentions, but I felt that an inspector so soft in heart and head was rather lucky to have remained in the Force at all.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In *The Little Glass Clock* (Aldwych) Kay Hammond and John Clements go Louis Quinze, very entertainingly (15/12/54). Rattigan's double bill, *Separate Tables* (St. James's) is still the best of the new straight plays (29/9/54). For a family outing, *Joyce Grenfell Requests the Pleasure* (St. Martin's) is our nap special (16/6/54). ERIC KEOWN

AT THE GALLERY

EUROPEAN MASTERS OF THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
(Royal Academy of Arts)
(Closes February 27, 1955)

GENERALLY acknowledged as lacking in comprehensiveness and balance, this winter's exhibition of paintings and drawings in the drab and shabby Royal Academy Galleries contains one great redeeming feature. It lies in the provision of something approaching an orgy of the work of a number of very likeable masters, of the Venetians Canaletto, Guardi, Tiepolo, and of the French Boucher and Fragonard. And very few admirers of these artists, however experienced, will not be agreeably thrilled by the sight of some, to them, fresh and exciting examples of one or all of them.

Canaletto: devotion to the exact delineation of architectural detail, relieved by the freer porcelain or confectionery-like quality of handling in his figures, wearing the delicious dress of the time, make up his general style. Among the works shown, including the two views from Richmond House, is the Queen's famous lagoon view (No. 9). In the latter, contrary to his usual practice,



[Spider's Web]

Clarissa Hailsham-Brown—MISS MARGARET LOCKWOOD

Pippa Hailsham-Brown—MISS MARGARET BARTON

Sir Rowland Delahaye—MR. FELIX AYLMER

broad free handling is used throughout the composition, making it a masterpiece of sustained mood and of suggestion of space.

Boucher, whose pink and snowy nudes, borne on the softest of clouds, have been the delight of generations of painters including Renoir—and, I believe, Matisse—though much of modern austere taste is laughably averse to them, Boucher is represented by a large magnificent example of this type of his painting (No. 77), and in addition by a host of smaller works, drawings and sketches, figure and landscape, including a "Chinese design" for a tapestry for Mme. Pompadour.

Fragonard, pupil of Boucher, is represented by nearly thirty of his works, including one of his few remaining large pieces, the others having been liquidated in the Revolution—the "Fête of St. Cloud" owned by the Banque de France. Fragonard's tremendous crispness and "go," expressed by the French word *brio*, are well seen in this heavenly, if slightly—as the result of varnish—over-golden, canvas. They may be observed even better in two superb sketches, in the same room, from the story of Rinaldo and Armida.

The large central Gallery (No. 111) contains a fascinating hotch-potch. Dominating the scene is the "Banquet of Cleopatra" by Tiepolo, from Melbourne—larger than anything of his that we have in the National Gallery. Tiepolo, delightful in his smallest sketches, can still afford to be very large indeed without losing by it. Finally, Gainsborough's splendid ladies from Dulwich, the Misses Linley, and a breath-taking sketch, Mrs. Horton (the latter in Gallery 4, No. 84), assure us once more of his princely qualities as a painter and portraitist.

ADRIAN DAINTRY



AT THE PICTURES

Carrington V.C.
Make Me An Offer

AS photographed plays go—and usually, of course, they don't go very well—*Carrington V.C.* (Director: ANTHONY ASQUITH) is strikingly good. Considered as a film it cannot in the nature of things be put so high; but it is still good enough to make the "photographed play" label seem unjust, or at least misleading.

Most of it consists of that proverbially infallible dramatic fascinator, a court scene: the trial by court-martial of Major Carrington, V.C., for misapplication of Army funds. In this, of course, the action (on which it is axiomatic that a film depends) is at a minimum, words are important all the time. But the whole thing is so well handled that there is never a moment when there is not also some interest or amusement for the eye. There are exterior shots (apart from introductory scenes, which give us some of the incidents that come up in evidence)



Carrington V.C.—DAVID NIVEN

Mrs. Carrington—MARGARET LEIGHTON

and views from the windows of the court-martial room, and similar footnotes or additions to the central scene; but nearly all the added interest comes by way of imaginative use of the camera in the central scene itself—close-ups or significantly angled shots of the witnesses or the members of the court, or the skilful juxtaposition of such shots.

This is perhaps to give too little credit to the acting. DAVID NIVEN does excellently as Carrington (it seems a long time since he was allowed a part with anything in it), MARGARET LEIGHTON is notably good as his wife, and many small-part people make splendid use of opportunities, from the explosively military sergeant who is the court orderly (STUART SAUNDERS) to the earnest, somewhat disapproving Judge Advocate (NEWTON BLICK).

The absence of any background music at all is immensely effective. Occasionally the scene takes on a hypnotic air of reality: when (for example) those present in the court make a move to stand up as it resumes after an adjournment, there is a perceptible stir in the cinema audience, unconsciously beginning to do likewise.

I was surprised to find myself liking *Make Me An Offer* (Director: CYRIL FRANKEL) so much. It is an unusual subject, and full of fresh detail, and that of course means a great deal; yet the basis of the story (from the novel by WOLF MANKOWITZ) is nothing very special, and what is presented as the principal character's main preoccupation, the thread that is supposed to hold the whole affair together, never seems to make as much effect as it should.

It is introduced in a flashback at the beginning: the antique-dealer and Wedgwood expert (PETER FINCH) recalls his youthful wonder at the sight of the Portland Vase, and we are given to understand that ever since he has been looking for a green one, a Wedgwood replica. But when it does turn up, his determination to possess it and the difficulties in the way do not impress us nearly as much as the miscellaneous decoration of the story, the odd characters among the dealers and the behind-the-scenes tricks of their trade.

Another subsidiary theme concerns his domestic affairs; ROSALIE CRUTCHLEY is first-rate here as his loving but discontented wife. In short, miscellaneous is the word: much of the best of the picture consists of scenes and incidents more or less independent of each other, with little developing tension or climax. But I found it very enjoyable.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Another new one in London is *Phffft*, a variation on the old theme of the divorce of a couple who really want to stay married: good fun, with the incomparable JUDY HOLLIDAY. *The Great Adventure* (8/12/54) continues to delight all ages, and *Bread, Love and Dreams* (3/11/54) is still going strong.

None of the new releases aroused my enthusiasm. *Mad About Men* (10/11/54) is for those who can never get tired of the *Miranda* joke, and the Royal Performance film *Beau Brummell* (1/12/54) is for those who can enjoy something much more if they know the Queen saw it first.

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

And All That

THE television dramatization of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Sunday and Thursday) must be accounted a success. To take a long-winded ironical essay and convert it into two hours of absorbing horror comic for the delectation of millions is no mean feat and Nigel Kneale and Rudolph Cartier are to be congratulated.

Orwell's essay is impressive chiefly for its brilliant and amusing inventions, for its absurdly detailed account of the mechanics of Big Brother's slave-state, for the clever minutiae of Newspeak, Thoughtcrime, Crimestop and the rest; without these passages of invention and wit the essay descends rapidly to the level of science fiction. And science fiction is what TV offered.

Barry Learoyd's designs were effective enough; only with an appropriation account as lavish as that for a super-colossal Hollywood screen epic could full justice have been done to the stark scenic horror of *Airstrip One*, and for the most part the TV cameras had to make do with close-ups. This meant that the second and less important half of the book acquired an exaggerated importance, and that Orwell will probably acquire an undeserved reputation with televisioners as the first of a new generation of literary horror-mongers.

I regret the omission of what I regard as the real Orwell, but I suppose it was inevitable. It is difficult to see how the adaptation could be improved in quality and authenticity without ruining the play for the majority of viewers. And it is difficult to imagine much better acting in the circumstances than that provided by Peter Cushing as Winston Smith, André



Julia (Yvonne Mitchell)

Winston Smith (Peter Cushing)

O'Brien (André Morell)

Morell as O'Brien, Yvonne Mitchell as Julia and Donald Pleasence as Syme. The horror, as horror goes, was first-rate.

When the play ended and the screen returned to such mundane matters as the weather and news of 1954 I found myself regarding my TV receiver with a new respect and no little awe. Big Brother seemed to be still there in the penumbral background.

The other week I felt strong enough to take another peek at "Quite Contrary," producer Richard Afton's glossy magazine programme of pin-ups, goeey glamour and song. I had allowed a decent interval to elapse before again submitting myself to the strain of listening to Catherine Boyle, the Littlewood Songsters, Raymond and Company, and I felt reasonably confident that the programme would show some slight improvement after a year's experience and experiment.

Oh dear! It was worse than ever, and reminded me even more sickeningly of

Evelyn Waugh's "Whispering Glades" and "Happier Hunting Ground." Everybody in "Quite Contrary" simpers, ogles and uses the language of lush American advertisements. Catherine Boyle, amiable and innocuous, introduces the performers in conventionally flattering terms, and each item is set in a cocoon of sugary music. The last offering of 1954 included another incredible display of "haute coiffure" by Raymond, who employs such terms as "teezie-weezie" "cubic line" and "dagger curl" with obvious pride and satisfaction, and who saluted his gorgeous Princess Charming with the memorable Malapropism "Doesn't she look simply ravenous!"

Then there was Mervyn Levy with a cosy natter about beards and what they can do for "our menfolk." He designed a beard for an absent friend, the devastating David Nixon, and explained at some length how his own hirsuteness improved his looks. A very sad misuse of talent.

As for the rest of the show, well, it is kinder to draw a veil, seven veils, across the glutinous affair.

Finally, to the Home Service for a remarkable series of gramophone record programmes introduced by Fred Bason. "A Tale with a Tune" is really the story of an indefatigable, irrepressible, gate-crashing cockney who collects autographs. Bason is still on the right side of forty (I think), but his voice is that of a starving, browbeaten old lag in some play by Edgar Wallace, and his recollections are all concerned with his elfin and rather pitiable attempts to rub shoulders with the stars of London life. He reads his script with embarrassing chumminess, yet in spite of himself and his material he succeeds in capturing the listener's attention.

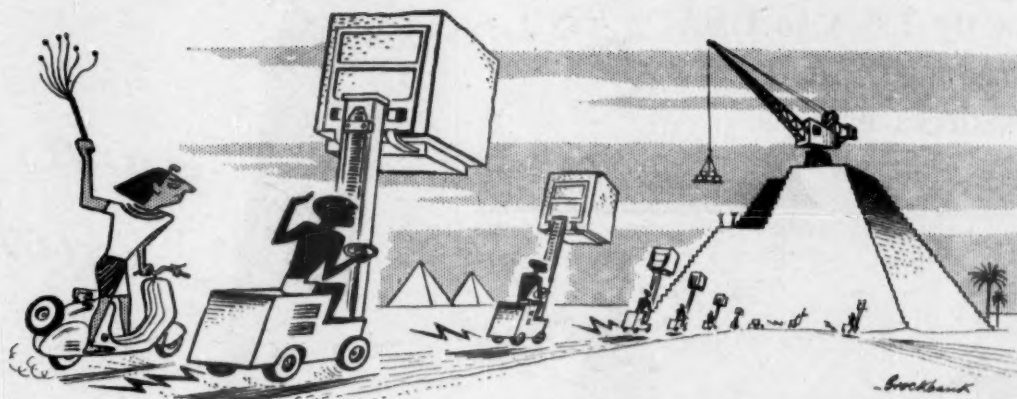
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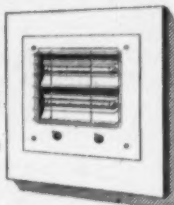
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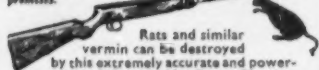
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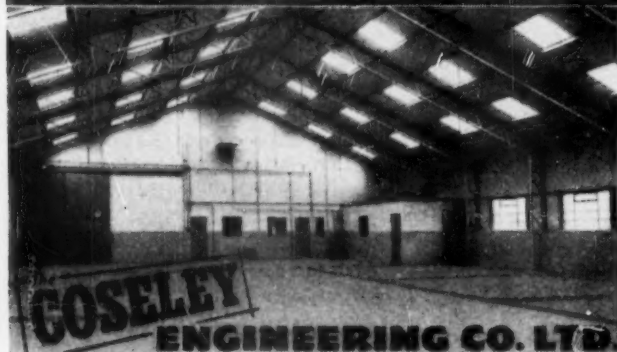
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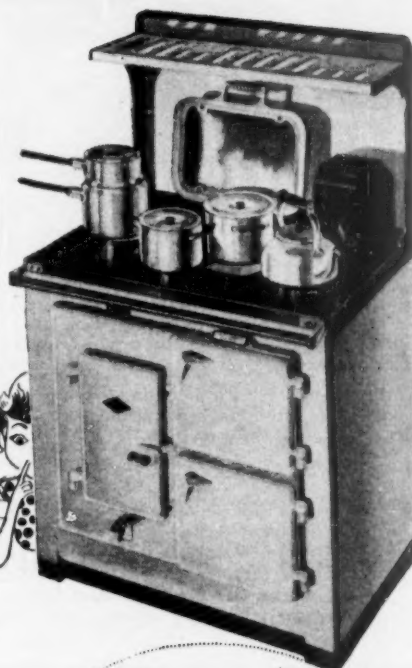
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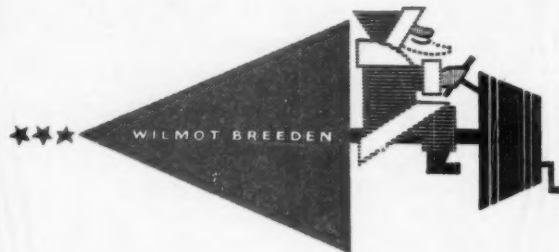
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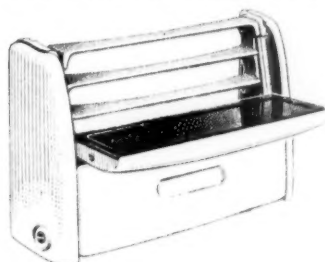
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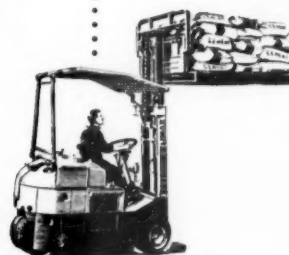
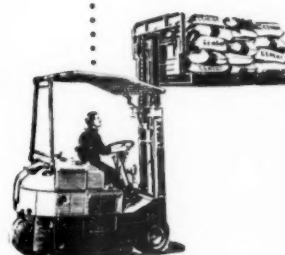
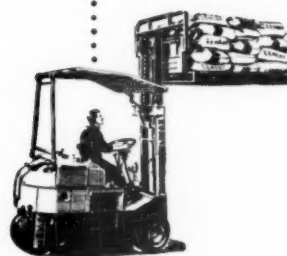
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